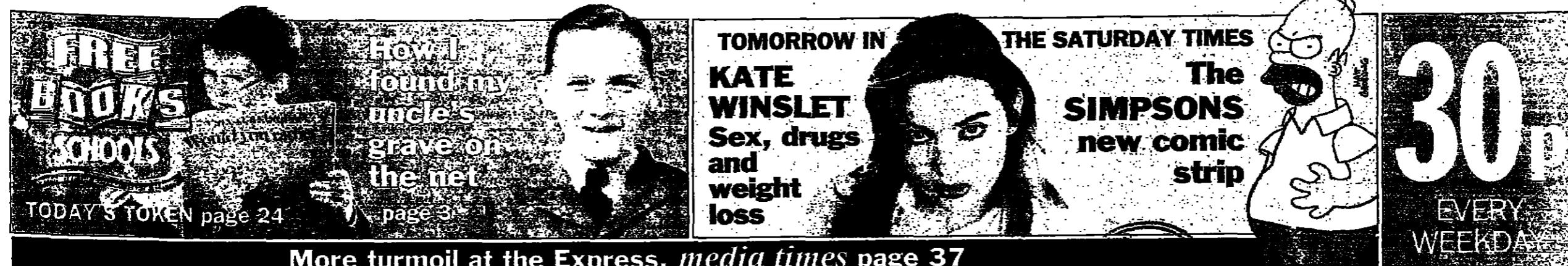


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Mandelson offered role in S Africa



Mandelson: his friends are urging him to take the job

By ROLAND WATSON
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER Mandelson was on course last night to make a dramatic return to his role as election strategist by travelling to South Africa and working for a smooth transition to Nelson Mandela's successor.

The job would see the former Trade Secretary acting as special adviser to the African National Congress, helping ensure the party's return to power and the election of Thabo Mbeki as president.

Mr Mandelson's name was mentioned for the role when Tony Blair met Mr Mbeki in Pretoria during

his three-day trip to South Africa earlier this month. The MP for Hartlepool, who resigned from the Cabinet before Christmas over his £373,000 home loan from Geoffrey Robinson, the former Paymaster General, is being strongly urged by some friends to take the job. Although he is interested in the role, Mr Mandelson has yet to commit himself to it.

One downside is that the three-month election campaign in South Africa clashes with a series of critical elections in Britain. A firm date will be set next month for the South African poll, but it is expected to be in May, or June at the latest. At that

time, Labour will be involved in campaigns for the Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly, local elections in large parts of the country and the European parliament.

Labour chiefs anxious to give Mr Mandelson a quiet rehabilitation away from the limelight are at pains to keep him at arms-length from the public face of the party's campaign. But as the man who masterminded the tactics for Labour's May 1997 General Election landslide, he will inevitably be called upon in an advisory role.

Another downside is that spending eight weeks or more in the South African sun would not square with

what some of his friends see as Mr Mandelson's best route back to office, namely toiling away on the "rubber chicken circuit" as a back-bench MP for Hartlepool.

The offer of the South African job dates back to before Christmas when political staff from the South African Embassy in London visited Downing Street to talk about the possibility. Mr Blair, who wants to foster closer links with the ANC as a way of developing "third way" policies, encouraged the idea.

Following his pre-Christmas resignation and given his background in election campaigning, Mr Mandelson's name became the obvious

front-runner. Despite his reservations, senior Labour figures expect him to spend at least part of the campaign for South Africa's second democratic election in Cape Town. Mr Mandelson's ties with African go back to when he spent a year in Tanzania before going to Oxford.

Labour MPs would almost certainly welcome the post. They were angered by Mr Blair's decision to keep Mr Mandelson on as his "personal representative" in talks with Gerhard Schröder's German administration and believe Mr Mandelson should serve a period of "quarantine" before trying to stage a political comeback. A purely political

role, particularly working for such a long-cherished left-wing cause as the ANC, would be likely to go down favourably on Labour's backbenches. Earlier this week Mr Mandelson's involvement in the Anglo-German talks was downgraded to head off a rebellion by Labour MPs.

In a separate development, the cross-party standards and privileges committee is expecting to hear from the new Parliamentary Commissioner Elizabeth Finkin next month on whether she believes Mr Mandelson broke parliamentary rules by failing to declare his loan from Mr Robinson in the MPs' register of interests.

GPs defy Dobson's Viagra rationing

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

DOCTORS were yesterday urged to prescribe Viagra free over the next six weeks because the Government can't implement the anti-impotence drug.

Defiance of Frank Dobson's intention to curtail prescriptions from March, the Medical Association's 1,000 impotent men going to P should be able to buy anti-impotence pills.

Government's plans to cap drug were de-

tight just well swallow Smartie'

By Thomas Stuttaford, page 6 leading article, page 23

ed by the BMA as cruel medical within minutes of being announced by the Secretary. Mr Dobson wants to limit NHS prescriptions for Viagra to men suffering from specific conditions. These are those who have had prostate operations or radical pelvic surgery and those suffering from spinal injuries, diabetes, multiple or single gene neurological disease.

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These categories are likely to cover only about 15 per cent of the two million men who suffer from erectile dysfunction. Others who are confirmed by a consultant to be suffering "severe distress" as a result of their impotence would also qualify for one NHS Viagra pill a week.

Anyone else with the condition could get a prescription from his GP for Viagra, but would then have to buy the pill privately from the chemist for about £6 each.

Mr Dobson announced his plan on the day that the BMA had issued a warning it would instruct members to start prescribing the drug if no guidelines were received from the Health Department.

He was advised on November 9 by the Senior Medical Advisory Committee that there were no medical reasons why the drug could not be prescribed on the NHS by GPs.

He was also advised by the committee to consider the priority that should be given to all methods of treating the condition relative to treatments for other conditions. It took Mr Dobson two and a half months to do this and he decided that the only way out is to ration treatment.

His decision was solely based on cost. "The cost of treating impotence could escalate," he said. "We have to find a sensible balance between treating men with a distressing condition and protecting the resources of the NHS to deal with other patients — for example, people with cancer, heart disease and mental health problems."

Doctors see this as an unwarranted intrusion into its duty to decide what treatment is best for a patient. During the six weeks that the Government plan is open for consultation the BMA is to encourage doctors to prescribe the pill freely on the NHS because there is no legal ban that can stop them doing so.

Minister to meet IRA families

By PETER FOSTER

A VILLAGE primary school came within a split-second of disaster yesterday after an RAF Tornado jet collided in mid-air with a Cessna light aircraft leaving four people dead.

Children from Mattersey school, near Worksop, north Nottinghamshire, were sitting at morning lessons when they heard a loud explosion shortly before 11.30. Seconds later, according to witnesses, debris from the light aircraft rained down over nearby fields, some pieces landing 200 yards from the school.

Less than a minute later in the village of Everton, three miles away, people reported another explosion as the Tornado GRI bomber came down half a mile from homes.

The £17 million Tornado, with two pilots on board — an RAF instructor and an Italian Air Force trainee — has manually operated ejector seats. One of the crew, the Italian, succeeded in ejecting before impact with the Cessna, but he did not survive.

Wing Commander Crispin Edmonds, acting station commander at RAF Cottesmore in Rutland, from where the Tornado had taken off, said that

Tornado crashed here
RAF Cottesmore
Everton AS123
Cessna crashed here
Half mile
Primary school
B6045
Mattersey

the jet had been on a routine flight. RAF Cottesmore is the home of the Tri-National Tornado Establishment, formed in 1979 to train pilots and navigators from the RAF, the German and Italian air forces.

Families of the victims were being contacted last night. No names had been released.

David Learmount, editor of Flight International, claimed that the system for preventing mid-air crashes over much of Britain was primitive.

Routes in and out of airports are covered by air traffic control systems but in uncontrolled air space, mainly over rural areas, light planes flying above 1,000ft can go where they like. "Around half of all UK air space is completely uncontrolled," he said.

Police were yesterday begin-

ning an investigation as the Air Accident Investigation Branch began sifting through wreckage. They confirmed that the Cessna had taken off from a private airfield at Gamston, near Retford, with two men on board.

Yesterday parents, some in tears, collected their children from Mattersey school and told of their relief after hearing how close it had been to disaster. Teresa Mapplebeck, 27, who has a four-year-old daughter, Stephanie, there said: "I heard a crack and saw the plane falling from the sky. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I dialled 999 then rang my friend, I was in a panic."

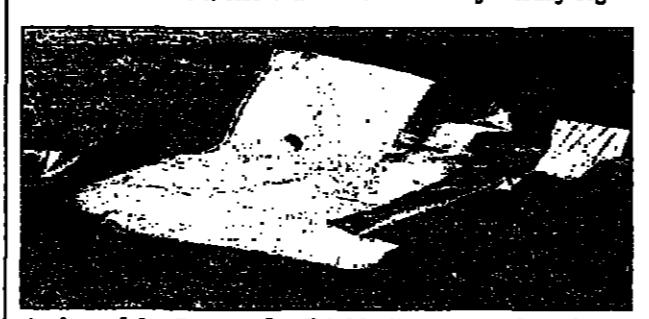
Mrs Mapplebeck then scooped up her son Liam, two, and drove to Mattersey. "I thought it had come down on top of the school. When I got there I saw debris on the road. There was a map which I think came from the plane. People were crying."

Rob Morley, collecting his daughter, Samantha, eight, and son, Dan, six, said: "I was driving with the radio on when I heard. I did not have a number for the school but telephoned a friend who told me how close they had all come."

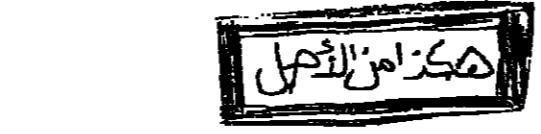
Samantha said: "We heard the bang, and went rushing to the windows. We saw the man parachuting down."

Douglas Scrivener, of Mattersey, said: "I saw a little plane flying around then I saw a jet which came out of nowhere. It went straight through the middle of the light aircraft. Those on board would have had no chance."

Linda Watkinson, 48, who lives 500 yards from the Everton crash, watched the RAF plane spiral to the ground.



A piece of the Cessna after RAF jet "came out of nowhere"



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Gurkhas join hunt for lost girls

By MICHAEL HORNELL

FIFTY Gurkhas joined the search in Hastings for the missing ten-year-olds, Lisa Hoodless and Charlene Lumnon yesterday, as police said that there had been four unconfirmed sightings of the girls in London since they disappeared on Tuesday.

The Gurkhas joined 300 police and 50 military police on the third day of the operation as the hunt spread from Hastings to open ground, woodlands and cliff tops in the surrounding Sussex countryside.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police were checking three unsubstantiated sightings in Plumstead, southeast London — two on trains and one on a bus — and one near the crematorium in Ruislip, northwest London, where the ashes of Charlene's mother, who died two years ago, were interred.

Parents' anger, page 5

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Millions trace war dead on Internet

War Graves Commission site is outstanding success, reports Michael Binyon

MORE than four million people have sought details of their relatives and loved ones in the two months since the names of all those killed in the two world wars were posted on the Internet. The figure is higher than the number of people who have visited the Internet site of Diana, Princess of Wales, and more than twice the number of war dead whose names have been recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The commission, set up in 1917 to tend the graves of soldiers of the British Empire who fell on the Western Front and elsewhere, published all its records, computerised since 1995, on the Internet on November 9, two days before Armistice Day. Since then the site has received more than 55,000 hits a day.

In addition, after publication of the Debt of Honour Register, containing the names and details of 1.78 million casualties, some 250,000 people from around the world have written to the commission seeking further details of their relatives and war dead. The commission's headquarters in Maidenhead, Berkshire, is being rebuilt to provide a faster and more reliable service.

The commission has a staff of 1,200 around the world, the

majority of them gardeners and some masons. It has a yearly budget of £32 million, funded by the six founding countries Britain, which pays over 75 per cent of the costs; Canada, Australia; New Zealand; South Africa and India.

The commission's main task is tending the impressive cemeteries, war memorials and graves across the vast swath of northern Europe that saw fierce fighting in both world wars, and in more than 100 other countries where Commonwealth soldiers have died.

The commission has offices close to the battlefields at Aras and Ypres and also in Rome. Keeping as detailed

records as possible to "defeat the oblivion of time" has been a prime task. From the earliest days, next of kin and comrades in arms have located and visited the graves and memorials.

In the 1920s the records were kept in card indexes in 3,000 drawers, cross-referenced to 1,500 cemetery registers. It was impossible to find anyone without knowing the surname or details of the date of death or regiment. A search carried out after a written request costs £2.

The new database is free and makes it possible to find people with only scant information to go on. The commis-

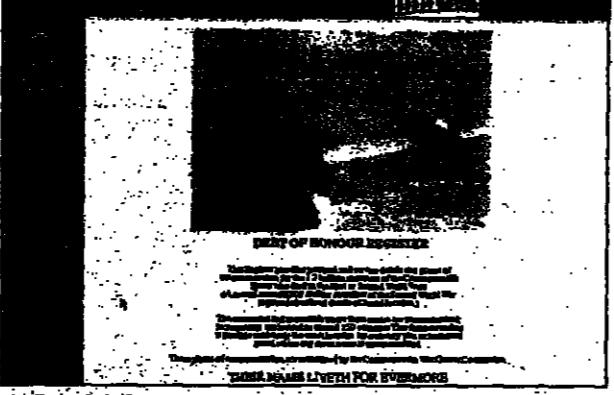
sion says it will be particularly valuable for family historians, teachers, researchers, journalists and all those keeping alive the name and memory of those who died.

Some of the most famous British poets and architects have been associated with the design of the cemeteries and the wording on war memorials. They include Rudyard Kipling, Frederick Kenyon, Edwin Lutyens and Reginald Blomfield. Under Fabian Ware, the first vice-chairman of the commission, the firm and, at that time controversial, principle was established that all the dead were to be uniformly commemorated, without distinction between rank, race or creed. All headstones are permanent and similar.

The Internet site reproduces these principles on screen. Each name called up has the same brief description: name, rank, company and date and place of death. On each there is a picture of two poppy wreaths at the foot of the Cenotaph and the celebrated Kipling epitaph: "Their name liveth for evermore."

Further information on each name gives a description of the battle, the circumstances and whatever else is known about the soldier and his regiment.

The commission's site is:



The Website containing 1.78 million names of war dead

The most popular sites are often the silliest

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE millions of websites on the Internet range from the silly and irreverent to the serious and informative.

Whether you want to biff the Prime Minister, slap a Spice Girl or indulge your passion for sports, politics or news and current affairs, someone is there to meet your demand. One of the most popular sites is BBC On-Line — www.bbc.co.uk — which has been attracting nearly 47 million visitors a month, closely followed by Yahoo's UK and Ireland pages, with 44 million.

Other chart-topping websites covered under official figures are Line One, an Internet service provider with 22.6 million visitors a month, and So-

cies, discussions on the legislation of drugs and comments on football mixed with silly games. www.urban75.com, which attracts about 300,000 visits a month, is the work of Mike Stocome, and offers, among other things, the chance to punch a celebrity. Estimating which sites are the most popular is almost impossible, but steps are being made to audit them to produce figures like those for newspaper circulations. The Audit Bureau of Circulation is covering 70 sites, mostly those of media organisations. Among them are www.uploaded.co.uk, an electronic version of *loaded* magazine (six million a month); the British Tourist Authority's www.visitBritain.com (2 million); and the pop music site www.dolmusic.com (1.4 million).

Taunted boy tried to scrub himself white'

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A BLACK boy tried to scrub himself white after being taunted by schoolmates who chanted the refrain from a traditional blues song often sung in assemblies.

Elaine Ramsay, 33, from Radcliffe, Manchester, has withdrawn her son, Elliott Stephens, from the school.

She said she could not understand why her son kept saying he wanted to be white until her sister told her about the song, sung at Radcliffe Junior School each week in assembly for the past three years.

Black, Brown and White was written and sung by the American country blues artist Big Bill Broonzy in the 1930s to record how racial prejudice made it difficult for black people to get jobs in the deep south.

The opening verse runs: "This little song that I'm singin' about! People, you all know that it's true! If you're black and gotta work for living! Now, this is what they will say to you! They says: 'If you was white! You're alright! If you was brown! Stick around! But if you's black, oh brother! Get back, get back, get back!'"

Ms Ramsay said that be-



cause the chorus is repeated five times, the children knew it off by heart and chanted it to their son in the playground. She said her son, as the only fully Afro-Caribbean child in the school, told her that everyone turned to stare at him when the song was sung.

Mrs Ramsay said: "He started to say he hated being black and that he wanted to be white. He took knives from the kitchen and said he wanted to kill himself. Once I found him scratching at his skin with a nailbrush to try to make himself white."

George Purcell, the head teacher, said the song had now been withdrawn.

Missing mother murdered, police say

By PAUL WILKINSON

POLICE searching for a missing mother said yesterday that they believe she has been murdered. Marsha Wray, 38, vanished two years ago this week after dropping her children Phillipa and Robert at primary school.

Yesterday her younger sister, Belinda Madisson, appealed for help in recovering her body so the family could take a proper farewell. She said: "Somebody somewhere knows what happened to Marsha. It is time they came forward. Not only do I need to know but also for the sake of Phillipa and Robert."

Mrs Wray's husband, Colin, 50, has admitted that their relationship was strained and that he was the prime suspect but he has denied any involvement in her disappearance. He claimed she told him she needed some time to herself and suggested she had left to start a new life.

Last May police raided their home in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, and a man was detained but later released without charge. Detective Inspector Javad Ali said that if Mrs Wray had died accidentally they should have found her body by now.

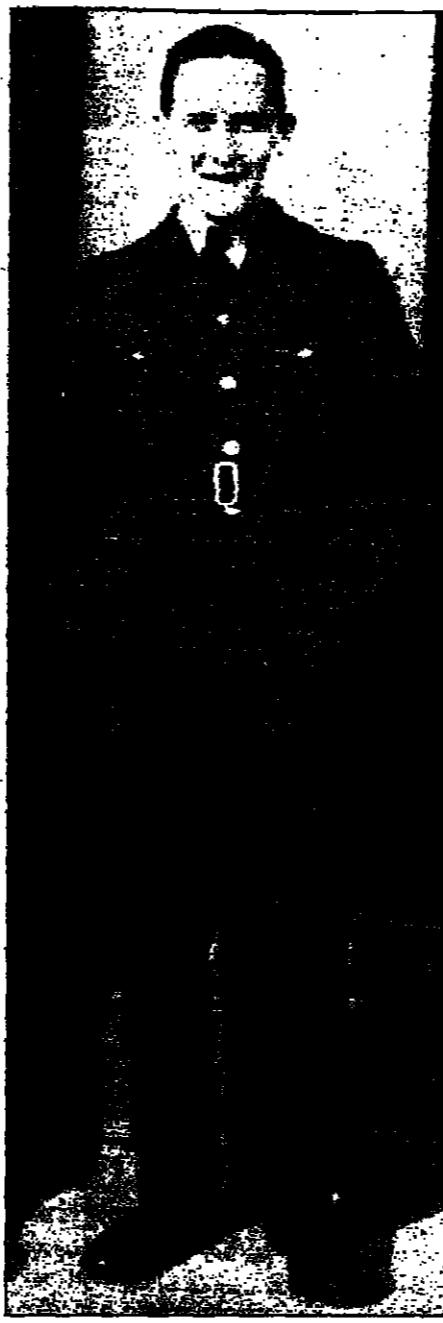
Druids take spell on duty

DRUIDS are liaising with council officers in Cornwall to protect ancient religious sites from damage when an estimated 1.5 million people descend on the county for the summer's eclipse. More than 100 stone circles, standing stones and chambered tombs are expected to become a focus for new-age mystics and tourists when the sun is blotted out on August 11.

Steve Hardgroves, the county council's principal archaeologist, said: "Pagans feel, as we do,

certain ownership and love for these sites." A new Cornish Sacred Sites Protection Network includes representatives from the National Trust, English Heritage, the Pagan Federation and the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. It has produced a code of conduct for visitors.

Ed Prynne, Arch Druid of the St Mervyn Druids, which claims 4,000 members, said: "Any one who has ever interfered with the stones has finished up dead in strange circumstances."



Flight Sgt Kenneth John Owen Hawkins

In search of our dear Uncle Owen

Armed with only scant details, David Charter went in search of his grandfather's brother, which triggered a long forgotten memory



THERE was an unwritten rule in my family that the death of Great Uncle Owen Hawkins was two generations on, still a subject too painful to talk about.

He was the youngest of four children and, as the baby, everyone's favourite. The few pictures that survive show he was barely out of his teens when he was shot down in the Second World War.

I remember my late grandfather lifting the rice-paper veil of a treasured photograph album and pausing over the image of his brother, a dashing young flier grinning with pride and confidence. Poor Owen, he said.

I believe my grandfather visited his grave once, somewhere on the Continent, but I don't remember him talking about it. My mother advised me not to push any questions as it would only upset him.

The details of Owen's sacrifice seemed in danger of being lost altogether when my grandfather, the last of the four siblings, died seven years ago. The lack of a memorial closer to home only added to the fragility of his memory.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website is very easy to use. Staring without even the official address of the site, my request on the Internet's opening search screen for "War graves" produced 29 options, the second of which is the commission.

After clicking on "search the register" twice, a basic question form asks for details of surname, initial, war or year of death, service and nationality.

At first it seemed as if it would be disappointed. Not one O. Hawkins was among the dozens of Hawkins listed as Royal Air Force casualties.

But the first name I clicked on, the only one with an O among the initials, turned out to be Flight Sergeant Kenneth John Owen Hawkins. I knew immediately it was Great Uncle Owen because it listed his parents' address, the village where my great grandparents are buried.

My first reaction was amazement, not just at finding the records so easily but at confirmation of Owen's age. He was just 21 when he died on Wednesday July 29, 1942. He was a pilot in 23 squadron RAF volunteer reserve. He is buried in Uden war cemetery in The Netherlands, grave 4.I.1.

My mother was delighted when I told her about the website. It triggered a fantastic last memory of her uncle, who dazzled his four-year-old niece on a surprise home visit shortly before he died. He promised to fly over the house for her and returned that afternoon, rocking the wings of his aircraft as he disappeared.

My mother's one regret about the Internet memorial is that, sadly, there is nobody left in the family of her father's generation to appreciate it.

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'Why weren't we told girls were missing?'



The girls should have walked just 500 yards down Woodland Vale Road to Christ Church Primary School in St Leonards. The 450 pupils said prayers for their safety yesterday as more police and soldiers were drafted in to the search

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THE parents of two ten-year-old girls missing from home demanded to know yesterday why they had not been told immediately by the school that they had not arrived for lessons.

Charlene Lunnon's father, Keith, and stepmother, Philomena, and Lisa Hoodless' parents, Andy and Julie, said the school in East Sussex should have contacted them especially after it issued a warning over the Christmas holidays about a man seen loitering near the buildings.

But Christ Church Primary School in St Leonards was backed by the local education authority over its decision not to alert them that the two pupils have good attendance records.

Police fear for frightened pair

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE 200 police drafted into Hastings from all over Sussex in the search for the two girls are led by the officer who headed the inquiry into the murder of Billie-Jo Jenkins in 1997.

Detective Superintendent Jeremy Paine has a team seconded in policing the decaying Cineplex Fort, where there are many down-and-outs and people on benefits living in bedsits. A specialist team of officers who have studied the behaviour of runaway children is also on hand. Mr Paine said it was rare for two children to disappear on their own.

"If you have a single child disappearing, it gets more and more likely there has been a tragedy — but we don't have a precedent for. They must be very frightened."

Police have made house-to-

Their absence was put down to "normal illness".

As the parents prepared to spend a third night without news, Mrs Hoodless' said of her daughter: "She is a very emotional child and she would be scared and very frightened, cold and hungry. If anybody has any information could they please come forward."

Mr Lunnon said of Charlene: "It is totally out of character. They never have not come home before 3.45pm. I cannot understand how this has happened."

The two girls had been walking to school on their own for a month after Lisa told her parents she wanted

ed to be "responsible". Lisa left home first to call for Charlene. The route passes no major roads or wooded areas. Residents have been asked to search sheds and garages.

State schools will be given new government advice today which could have saved crucial hours in the search for the girls. Estelle Morris, the School Standards Minister, is expected to tell head teachers that they should contact parents on the first day that a child is absent. At present the usual practice is to wait until the second day.

Christ Church School followed the current guidelines, issued five years ago, which put the onus on parents to inform schools of the reasons for a child's absence. A council spokeswoman said the school contacted parents immediately only if the absences were regular truants.

Most state schools adopt the same practice, assuming that a child is ill unless there is reason to suspect truancy. Parents are contacted if there is no explanation for a prolonged absence.

The new guidelines are part of the Government's drive to cut truancy. They are expected to say: "On the first day of absence, if a pupil is absent without explanation when the school register is called, school staff should — wherever possible —

contact the parents that same day."

At the school yesterday the 450 pupils said prayers for Charlene and Lisa. Parents have tied a yellow ribbon to the main gate to express their sympathy with the girls' families.

In the staffroom and head teacher's study at the Church of England school there is growing anxiety and resentment at any suggestion that the school has been remiss. Anne Hanney, the head, and Father Richard Harper, chairman of governors, said the school, which was founded in the late Victorian era, had followed the guidance of local education authority in dealing with

the absences. Since alerting parents of a possible sniffer — a man seen in a white van near the school — the school has continued to operate a policy in which it takes no immediate action over absence unless the pupil has a poor attendance record.

The school, which has a good local reputation, is supported by the local education authority. A spokeswoman for the county council said: "There was nothing to suggest the girls' absence was due to anything but normal illness."

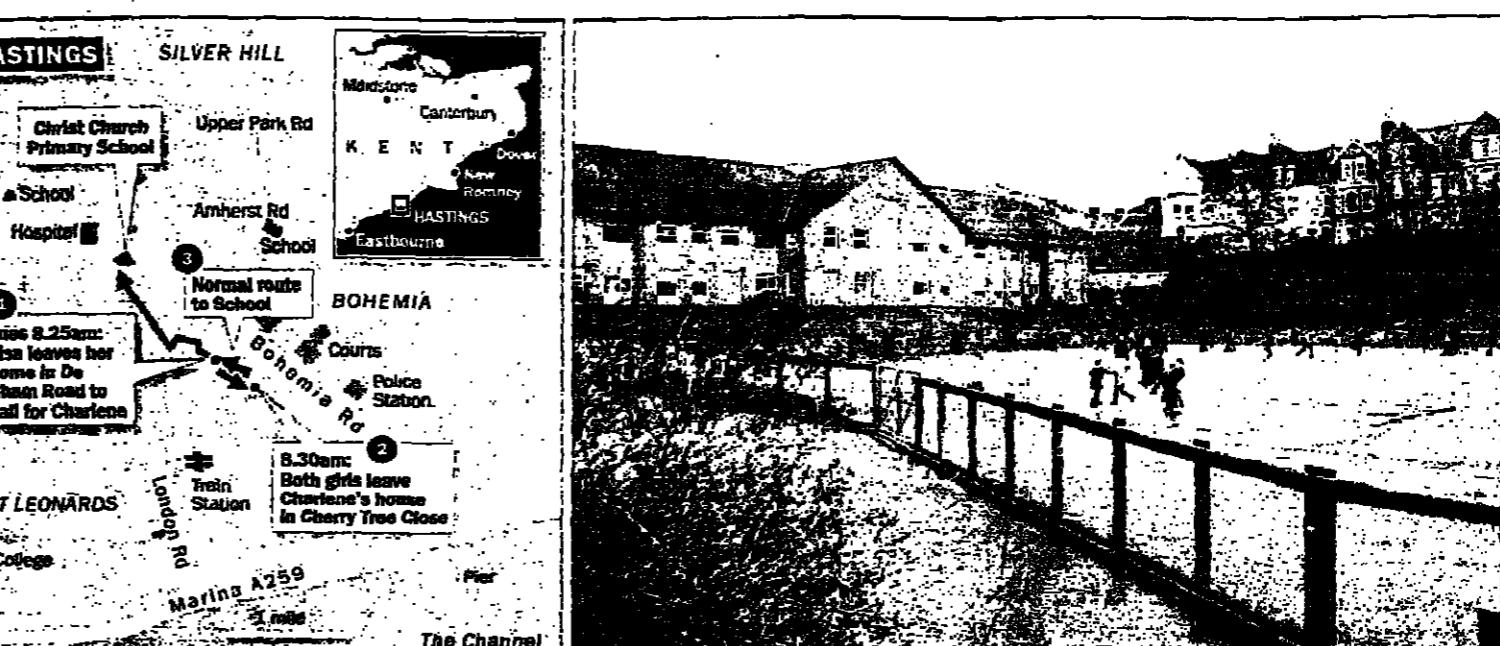
"While individual policies vary, our guidance suggests schools encourage parents to contact schools

on the first day their child is absent."

If parents don't do that, schools are advised to contact parents that first day only where it is appropriate. These two girls certainly did not have a poor record of attendance. The school followed normal procedures.

David Hart, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the link with the search for the two girls should not silence debate on the merits of the Government's revised guidelines. "Having to follow up all absences on the first day is going to impose a severe burden on many schools."

Mr Hart said: "Parents often do not notify schools as soon as children are ill, so there is no reason to think that anything is amiss."



The girls should have walked just 500 yards down Woodland Vale Road to Christ Church Primary School in St Leonards. The 450 pupils said prayers for their safety yesterday as more police and soldiers were drafted in to the search

Parents say they should have been alerted at once when girls failed to arrive at school, reports John O'Leary

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Lisa had 'a minor problem at home'

DETECTIVES said that Lisa Hoodless was worried about some aspect of her home life, but they made it clear that it was a minor problem and did not explain why she should have run away (Michael Horsnell writes).

Lisa, 10, lives with her father, Andy, 37, a council gardener, and her mother, Julie, 35, together with her brother, James, 12, and sisters, Christine, 7, and Georgia, 12 months, in a semi-detached house in De Cham Road, Hastings. There was no sign that she had made any preparations to run away or that she took any money with her.

She and Charlene became friends when Charlene moved into a house in the next road, only 400 yards from Christ Church school — a journey they made together each morning, but on which they

were always accompanied on their return.

Lisa, who is said to be a sensible, responsible girl, is a fan of the Spice Girls. Police hope that her distinctive orange jacket bearing the words Spice Fever and her pink Spice Girl bag will lead to her identification.

Grieving may have prompted journey

CHARLENE LUNNON was traumatised by the death of her mother, Sandra, after an asthma attack in February 1997 and her disappearance may be connected to her grief (Michael Horsnell writes).

Charlene, who lived with her mother after her parents separated, does not like to be on her own and is afraid of the dark.

After going to live with her father, Keith, and his new wife last April, she took comfort from visits to the crematorium in Ruskin, West London, where her mother's ashes are interred. Police believe that she may have become upset because of the approaching second anniversary of her mother's death and may have decided to visit the crematorium with Lisa Hoodless.

Mr Lunnon, a drugs and alcohol counsellor, said: "Last

year I took her to where the ashes are and she was upset because she loved her mother very much. Charlene knew that if she wanted to go there we could, but she didn't ask me."

The girl has three older sisters. She is devoted to her hamster, which she received for her birthday last month.

Mr Lunnon, a drugs and alcohol counsellor, said: "Last

Security trick leads to airport inquiry

By MARK INGLEFIELD, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government is to hold an investigation into airport security after a serious breach allegedly took place at Heathrow.

The inquiry, which was announced yesterday by John Reid, the Transport Minister, came after an undercover reporter gained a security pass to work for Skyliner Services, one of the main clearing firms at Heathrow.

The reporter, who was working for *The Sun*, claimed that he had secured a pass despite supplying the company with a string of bogus references. Skyliner employed him three weeks later and he was given unsupervised access to the kitchen and bar areas of six aircraft. The company declined to comment yesterday.

As result of this alleged security breach, Dr Reid has ordered BAA, the airports authority, to withdraw security passes from all Skyliner Services' temporary staff.

Dr Reid said that no new temporary passes would be issued "until such time as we are satisfied necessary and appropriate checks have been carried out to ensure that each individual is a suitable person to be employed at the airport".

Dr Reid also asked his officials to carry out "an urgent re-

appraisal of the regulations governing the issue of all employee passes at UK airports".

Although the minister stopped short of revoking Skyliner's contract, he made it clear that this was one of the "range of punitive measures" that might be taken if the company were found to be negligent in its security procedures.

The Sun had claimed that its reporter was left alone on six aircraft and was able to take a photograph of himself yards from the cockpit.

Dr Reid said yesterday that, so far, all he had were allegations, but "the prima facie report is sufficiently serious for all of us, public and ministers, to be concerned". He said he thought that between ten and 20 temporary staff were employed by the firm.

The Sun carried the report on Wednesday, ten years after the paper exposed security failures at the airport in the wake of the Lockerbie bombing.

"The fact that there's ten years in between should in no way diminish the seriousness," Dr Reid said. "It only takes one breach of security to undermine all of the efforts which BAA in particular, and our officials and inspectors and security specialists, have been making."

Stone inquiry to look at health law

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE independent inquiry into the care of Michael Stone, convicted last October of the murders of Lin and Megan Rees, will also report on the adequacy of current mental health law, it emerged yesterday.

West Kent Health Authority, which was responsible for Stone's care at the time of the killings in July 1996, said that it was keen to establish whether the case should prompt the Government to consider changing the law governing the compulsory detention of people with mental health problems.

Although he was known to have a criminal record and to be prone to violent outbursts, Stone could not be detained under the Mental Health Act

against his will because he had been found to be suffering from a personality disorder deemed to be untreatable.

The case raised intense debate about what should be done to protect the public from people with personality disorders who may be a threat to others, but who have not committed a crime and cannot therefore be detained.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, attracted criticism from psychiatrists after he accused them of using out-of-date working practices. He said it was "extraordinary" that they would take on only those patients they regarded as treatable.

The panel, chaired by Robert Francis, QC, is expected to report by the end of the year.

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World Society for the Protection of Animals



Valerie Marshall will lead a £720,000 quest for a naturally creamy yoghurt

Yoghurt scientists win pot of EU cash

By PAUL WILKINSON

A RESEARCH team has won a £720,000 grant from Brussels for a three-year project on making yoghurt creamy.

The European Commission is helping scientists from the dairy industry to develop a natural thickening process, avoiding the need for artificial additives and gelatine.

The team, drawn from across Europe, is led by Valerie Marshall, a microbial biochemist at Huddersfield University. She said that improving yoghurt consistency had long been a challenge for manufacturers. "We want to develop a yoghurt to get that creamy feel naturally by harnessing its natural organisms. This way is cheaper, because you're using a process that is already there."

The team was one of only 50 to win grants out of 500 applicants working on food or agriculture projects. Professor Marshall said: "I don't think it's an awful lot of money because it's shared between seven partners. That works out at about £30,000 a year to each."

Tomorrow in **the times**
magazine

KATE WINSLET
as never before

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Blair says we need more do-gooders

By MARK HENDERSON AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

A DIRECTORY providing details of voluntary organisations is to be sent to every household in Britain as part of a drive to promote charity as figures disclosed that individual giving had dropped by nearly a third over five years.

The directory, which will set out opportunities for voluntary work, is one of the initiatives announced by the Prime Minister yesterday to increase support for charities. Addressing the National Council of Voluntary Organisations conference, Tony Blair urged Britons to mark the millennium with an "explosion in giving" and for the term "do-gooder" no longer to carry a sneering tone.

Mr Blair said: "Let those of us who believe in the power of community reclaim the idea of doing good and wear it as a badge of pride. It is good to do good — good for those charities and organisations and neighbourhoods in which the good is being done, but good for the do-gooder as well." His comments build on his call at the 1997 Labour Party conference for a "giving age".

Yesterday he also announced plans for a Whitehall task

force, the Active Community Unit, to co-ordinate and promote voluntary work across the country, and two new schemes that will encourage people to give time to charity.

The measures coincided with the publication by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations of figures showing that donations to charity have fallen by 31 per cent in the past five years. Separate research from the National Centre for Volunteering showed a decline in the number of people giving their time. The biggest drop was among young people. Seven years ago 55 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds said they had volunteered in the past year. The figure is now 43 per cent.

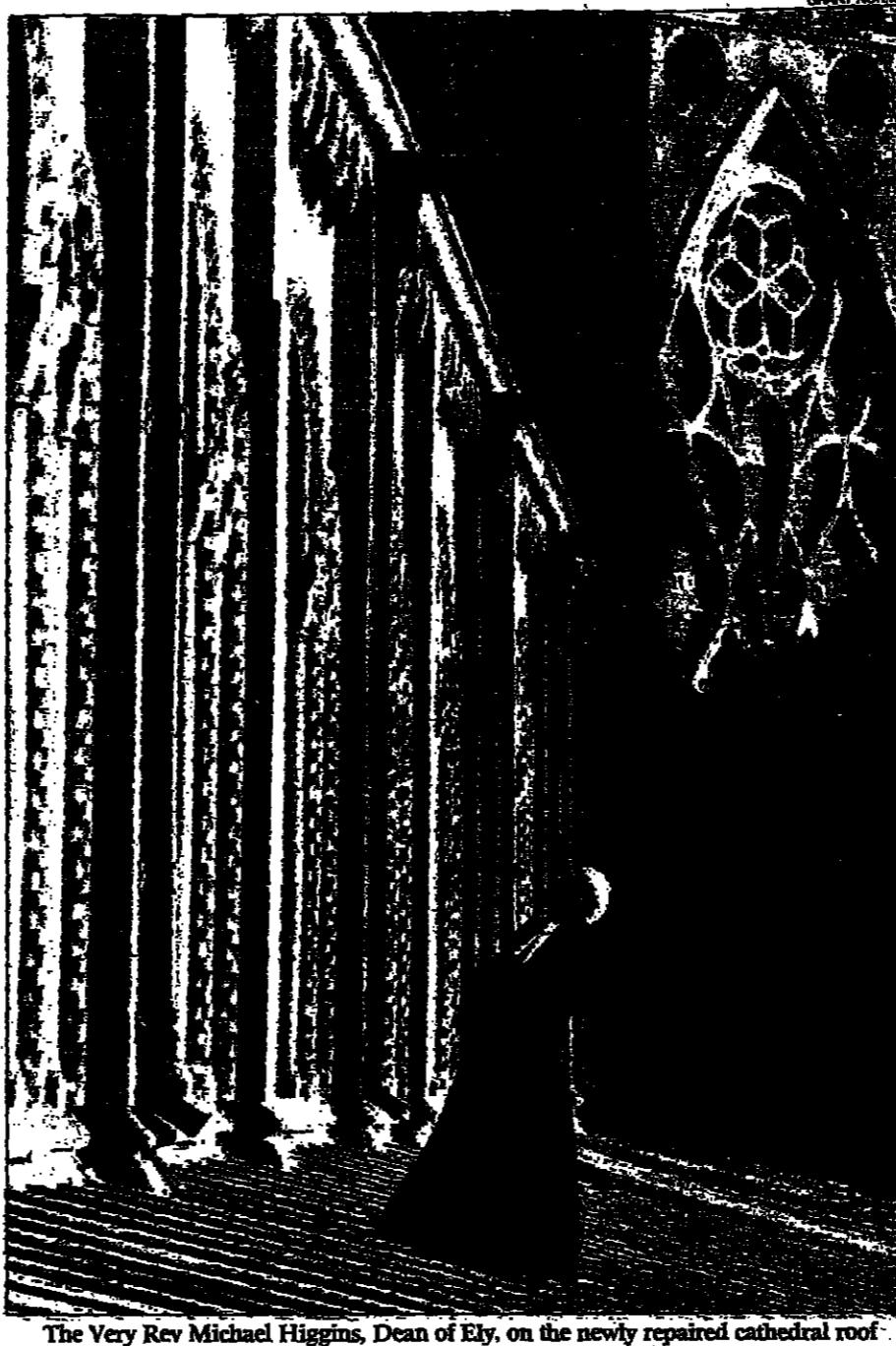
Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the NCVO, welcomed the initiatives, but called for tax breaks to encourage the rich to donate, and for charities to be exempt from VAT. "If it is a priority for government to give support to the sector, we need to see mechanisms that will help generate income and individual giving."

Mr Blair also launched the Millennium Awards Fellowship programme yesterday.

40,000 Britons will receive grants of an average of £2,000 by the end of next year to undertake community and charity projects. The £200 million programme is funded by the Millennium Commission, and an endowment fund will make the scheme permanent.

Millennium Fellows will receive a certificate of achievement, the first of which were presented by Mr Blair yesterday. These are intended to increase the esteem in which volunteers are held by society. The idea has been copied from America, where a period of voluntary service is virtually obligatory on the strongest CVs.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, announced details yesterday of the Millennium Volunteers programme, which will use £48 million of public money to provide thousands of 16 to 24-year-old opportunities for voluntary work. The scheme had been intended as a kind of civil "national service" taking in hundreds of thousands of people, but has been scaled back because of problems with long-term funding. Participants will receive certificates of achievement.



The Very Rev Michael Higgins, Dean of Ely, on the newly repaired cathedral roof

City lawyers give up their time to help pupils with reading

Hannah Betts on a project that is benefiting from free books scheme

A SCHOOL named after the father of genetic engineering has come up with a cross-fertilisation strategy of its own to boost its involvement in *The Times* Free Books for Schools Scheme.

Thomas Fairchild School, in Hackney, East London, and Linklaters, a leading City law firm, joined forces in September to form an in-school reading programme and are now directing their combined energies to collecting tokens for the scheme.

Every week 40 Linklaters lawyers and support staff devote one of their lunch breaks to teaching reading at the school. The project was massively oversubscribed, with almost 200 staff applying to help. The pairings are the same each week, so that a



bond is forged between two very different worlds.

The primary school is located in an economically deprived area and, for a large proportion of the children, English is their second language.

Alasdair Friend, the head teacher, said: "Literacy is one of our top priorities, but it's also been a real cultural exchange. We're less than five minutes away from the City, but some of our children have never been there. It's an introduction to another world."

The reading partners be-

come firm friends. Gary McKinzie-Smith, a trainee solicitor, reads with eight-year-old Baboucar Jeng, known as Babs. Mr McKinzie-Smith said: "The relationship is a unique one for me: he's eight

and I'm 25. We've both enjoyed meeting someone from a different walk in life." Mr McKinzie-Smith says that Babs can be cheeky and enjoys the kudos that the scheme brings him with other children.

Since the project started,

reading has become the fashionable lunchtime activity at Thomas Fairchild, with pupils lining up to meet the Linklaters' taxis. At Christmas, a

celebration was held at Linklaters for lunchtime readers.

Lately, children and lawyers alike have become avid collectors of the Free Books for Schools tokens printed in *The Times* and on packets of Walkers crisps. "Our token collecting's going really well. Babs enjoys crisps and I always read *The Times*," Mr McKinzie-Smith said.

□ Does your school or business have a story to tell about its participation in *The Times* Free Books for Schools Scheme? If so, please call on 0171-995 9018. At the end of the scheme, *The Times* will publish a Free Books for Schools honours list in which successful schools and businesses will be commended for the number of tokens they collected and for the original ways in which they did so. Telephone your nominations now.

Token, page 24

Bible class finds room at the inn

By SUE LAPPEMAN

A SUNDAY school class is to meet in a pub after having to leave the vicarage.

Children from St Peter and St Paul's Church in Shoreham, Kent, will have their lessons next to gaming machines and a pool table in the back room of the George Inn at Shoreham, Kent.

The class, now with 20 pupils, had been meeting in rooms at the former vicarage for the past 13 years but the family that lived there has decided to rent out the rooms.

The Rev Barry Simmons found the most convenient venue for the school at the pub across the road.

Mick Fiznis, the landlord, said: "The room at the back of the pub is not connected to the main bar". Mr Simmons said: "We shall be there only from 10.30 to 11.30 on Sunday mornings so there won't be any of the public there."

Oxford college suspends its anti-fees protester

By HANNAH BETTS

ed that she and the whole of the Senior Common Room would be extremely sorry if Ms Paskell-Brown decided not to reconsider her position.

The suspension will come into force on Monday, after Ms Paskell-Brown has had an opportunity to appeal. Under the ruling, she will be banned from all college buildings.

Ms Paskell-Brown, 18, said the move would force her to submit. "The last few days have been absolutely hellish, and in many ways I'm just glad it's all over. I defend my principles into the ground but I'm not afraid to back down if I can't go on."

Elizabeth Llewellyn-Smith, the Principal of St Hilda's College, said yesterday: "We couldn't carry on with a situation in which one of our students was nominally on a degree course, but not able to carry out the job she was here to do. It was a half-baked situation. It's not a punitive action — we're not doing our duty by a student if she can't work."

Miss Llewellyn-Smith added: "She wanted to speak to each student before announcing the college's decision."

Yesterday the colleges issued a statement: "The university, Somerville and St Hilda's Colleges are prepared to take action in response to the non-payment of tuition fees by a small number of students."

"We regret that the protest which these students are making against the Government's changes to the funding of higher education has put them in this position. However, we must consider the consequence of their actions for their studies and the implication of their non-payment for other members of the university. We hope this matter will be resolved as soon as possible."

Today 2,000 students from around the country will take part in Oxford's biggest demonstration for nine years.

John O'Leary, page 41

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Pinochet 'can only be tried in Spain'

By JOANNA BALE

EXTRADITION to Spain is the only way to bring General Pinochet to justice because Chile is unlikely to put him on trial, Amnesty International told the law lords yesterday.

Ian Brownlie, QC, for Amnesty International, said: "It appears to be extremely unlikely that justice will be done in Chile and, given the obvious absence of any jurisdiction of an international criminal tribunal, then all that is left are extradition proceedings."

Addressing the new hearing to decide the general's fate, Professor Brownlie stated that, if extradition was denied, the former dictator "would have the benefit of a wall of impunity". He also argued that international conventions on torture and hostage-taking adopted into British law were sufficient to deny General Pinochet the immunity for a head of state that he is claiming.

Sections of the State Immunity Act 1978, which might be deemed to afford him immunity, did not do so, he said. "The State Immunity Act does not apply to criminal proceedings.

In any case, you cannot have

immunity from proceedings over acts which constitute crimes in international law."

Professor Brownlie made no mention of the fact that it was Lord Hoffmann's failure to disclose his close links with Amnesty International that had caused the law lords to set aside their initial decision denying immunity to General Pinochet.

Amnesty was once again granted permission to address the hearing, and the organisation's counsel is also representing two other human rights groups as well as the families of two British victims of the Pinochet regime, William Beauchamp and Sheila Cassidy.

Earlier, the law lords were told that tortures alleged to have been carried out under the orders of the general had long been recognised as crimes under international law.

Christopher Greenwood, for the Crown Prosecution Service, on behalf of Spain, argued that there was a clear international consensus about torture.

He said: "We are not dealing with an area of international law on which reasonable states differ-



Lucia Pinochet, wife of the former dictator, greeting supporters outside his home in Surrey. She thanked them for their efforts on his behalf

We are dealing with conduct which for 60 years has been unequivocally deemed to be unlawful, a crime under international law."

Professor Greenwood went on to say that the allegations against General Pinochet were not purely an internal matter for Chile. "Torture falls into the category of acts which have become a matter of concern to the entire international

community, wherever they take place." He argued that it was clear that individual countries had jurisdiction to try allegations of torture, pointing out that the proposed international criminal court was not yet operating, and that tribunals to try alleged crimes in troubled areas such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were still rare. "There is only one way in which criminal re-

sponsibility can be brought home — that's by prosecution in a national court."

On Wednesday Professor Greenwood cited the international Convention against Torture 1984, incorporated into English law in 1988, as the basis for his argument that there is worldwide jurisdiction for prosecuting torture allegations, and that former heads of state have no immunity. He also pointed to a long history of judicial decisions which, he argued, demonstrated those principles, including the agreements that established the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, a 1954 report of the International Law Commission, and the statute of the proposed international criminal court.

More than a hundred of General Pinochet's supporters yesterday gathered near the

rented home on the Wentworth estate in Surrey where he is living under the conditions of his bail and were addressed by his wife, Lucia. Through a loudspeaker she thanked them for coming all the way to Britain to "express personally your belief in the values of freedom and dignity that inspire Chileans".

The lords' hearing continues on Monday.

Judge discharges juror for using mobile phone

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A JUROR was discharged by a judge yesterday after he learnt that she had taken a mobile telephone call while deliberating on a case.

The young mother was overheard by a usher making baby-sitting arrangements with her mother, from the retiring room, where she was trying to reach a verdict on a case involving three men and a woman accused of physical abuse of mentally handicapped adults at a home.

The jury had already been out for 3½ hours on Wednesday afternoon when the usher went into their room at Exeter Crown Court to tell them that they could be sent home for the night. By law, a jury should be isolated during their deliberations "in a private and convenient place".

Judge Graham Neville, discharging the juror, who had sat through eight days of the

trial, told the remaining 11 members of the panel that mobile telephones were an increasing problem for the courts. "I have discharged the lady juror with her mobile phone," he said. "We do not know what to do about mobile phones. People are told not to use them in court, but they are everywhere now and we cannot take something away from them that is their property, just ask them not to use it."

"I am sure the juror did not do anything improper, but we have to be on the safe side."

A spokesman for the Lord Chancellor's Department said that courts routinely had signs up saying that mobile telephones should be switched off, or, in some cases, handed in.

In March last year, a judge ordered a court reporter to be taken to the cells when his mobile telephone went off in the middle of a trial. In November

1997 a BBC reporter was ordered out of court in South Africa, where he was covering the Earl Spencer divorce case, after his mobile telephone rang.

In yesterday's case, the judge asked the remaining jurors to continue their consideration of the trial involving three care homes in Torquay, Devon.

Donald Lee, 48, denies seven counts of ill-treating one female and three male patients in his guardianship. Diane Baxter, 51, denies two counts of ill-treating two female patients; David Tudor-Poole, 30, denies six counts of ill-treating four female and two male patients; Ivan Rowlands, 52, denies ill-treating one female patient.

The charges followed a joint investigation by police and Devon social services after complaints by relatives.

Warning over gene weapon for ethnic cleansing

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

WEAPONS capable of ethnic cleansing could become a reality within ten years, with the information needed to make them being available on the Internet, the British Medical Association said yesterday.

Current research aimed at developing drugs to cure serious diseases such as cancer would make it possible to create a "delivery system" for biological weapons able to target specific groups of people with a killer virus, said Sir William Ascher, chairman of the BMA's board of science. "Science which is being used for benign purposes can be put to malignant use."

Vivienne Nathanson, head of ethics at the BMA, said that, as knowledge of human genetic make-up increased, it would be possible to target very specific groups. Height, skin and eye colour were all factors that could be identified and a biological weapon could then be created to harm only people with those genes.

Work on the Human Genome Project, which aims to identify all human genes and map them by 2005, will make it possible to be very specific about what genes make up each individual. It is also now scientifically agreed that "races" do not exist; certain groups merely have higher concentrations of some genes.

Diseases such as cancer are caused by genes that have an abnormal structure. Genetic therapies are being developed that enable drugs to be designed so that they only attack the unhealthy genes. In the treatment a gene is introduced that recognises the unhealthy cells, triggering the release of a virus or poison that destroys the cancer. Healthy cells are left untouched.

The genetic weapon would work in an identical way, recognising victims by their genetic make-up and then releasing a virus that killed them. Dr Nathanson said the information would be available on the Internet and the drugs could be made in small laboratories. Terrorists as well as states could use the technology.

Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity: BMJ Bookshop, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9TP, £14

Recycling clue to evolution

By NICK NUTTALL

THE mystery of how the elephant developed its trunk, the deer its antlers and the giraffe its neck may have been solved by scientists.

Researchers believe that a tiny genetic trick common to all animals, can lead to a bewildering array of shapes and forms, from extravagantly furred and elaborate shells to the colours of butterflies' wings.

It was previously thought that animals would have need-

ed to evolve new genes, but

findings by a team at the University of Madison-Wisconsin indicate that nature simply re-orders genetic circuits in new ways. Their conclusions, in the journal *Science*, come from a study of wing-making genes in fruit flies and two different species of butterfly from North America and East Africa.

They traced the genetic circuitry that governs wing development and colour, and found that genes used to make spots on butterfly wings were the same as the ones used to develop limbs in animals. The difference was in the way in which parts of the gene were switched on.

switching on a new range of enzymes or biological catalysts.

David Keys, a member of

the team, said: "Evolution is working by integrating sets of things it already has. You are using a circuit over and over again."

Sean Carroll, a molecu-

lar biologist and the team's leader, said that the genes used to make spots on butter-

fly wings were the same as the ones used to develop limbs in

animals. The difference was

in the way in which parts of the gene were switched on.

Many of the fish were eventually washed into a river.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thief seen on TV is jailed

A thief who was spotted by his victim six years later on a television show was jailed for two years yesterday.

John Parsons had stolen jewellery and antiques worth £60,000 after offering to help Pamela McMahon, an American businesswoman, to move house in London. She spotted him when he appeared on *This Morning* as a gay rights campaigner and rang the police. Parsons, 44, of Manchester, was found guilty of theft at Southwark Crown Court.

PC found guilty

A police officer was found guilty of indecently assaulting two women. Barry Richardson, 39, of King's Lynn, was given conditional bail by Norwich Crown Court. Sentence was adjourned until February 12.

Retrial ordered

A police photographer was cleared at Preston Crown Court of indecently assaulting two women. Peter Sayward, 45, of Lytham, Lancashire, faces a retrial on a similar charge of taking a full-frontal picture of a female assault victim.

Royal eviction

The Prince of Wales has joined West Country landowners in legal moves to evict travellers from Duchy of Cornwall property. About 20 caravans and 30 vehicles have been parked near Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset, since October. The beacon at Beachy Head, which has warned shipping for 171 years, has gone out after the recent cliff fall damaged the main cable. A foghorn has also been cut off. The lighthouse is operating on an emergency lamp.

Trout break out

Trout swam through gardens and along the roads of an estate in Cwmaman, South Wales, after a trout farm flooded in heavy rain and a run-off culvert became blocked. Many of the fish were eventually washed into a river.

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Kosovo peace monitor defies Serb ban

Instead of leaving the country as ordered, William Walker is fighting back, writes Tom Walker in Sipolje

THE head of the international monitoring mission in Kosovo defied Serbian government orders to leave Yugoslavia yesterday. Instead, he took journalists on a tour of army positions that he said were in breach of the ceasefire.

William Walker had intended to fly to Belgrade to confront his accusers but, on a late from Wesley Clark, Nato's Supreme Commander, he cited it was too risky. It would have given Yugoslav authorities the chance to deny his plane landing permission and ditch him out of the country.

Confident Mr Walker himself had strong new evidence to back his assertion that Serbian security forces were responsible for the Racak massacre. There was speculation among monitors that intercepting police radio messages may have been picked up during observations of the operation that left 45 ethnic Albanians dead, most with bullet wounds to the head.

Milosevic has pushed himself into a corner, and he suddenly realises he doesn't even have the support of Russia."

US calls for Nato airstrike threat against Milosevic

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

THE Americans are calling for Nato to issue an ultimatum to President Milosevic to force him to comply with all demands over Kosovo or face airstrikes.

Although the ultimatum option has not yet been approved by Nato members, a Foreign Office official confirmed that this was now one of the priority topics under discussion at alliance headquarters Brussels. Nato sources said Washington was not the only alliance member pushing for an ultimatum.

Britain is expected to support the idea, although the Foreign Office official said it would not be practical unless a proper political strategy had been agreed. The ultimatum option will be studied at today's meeting of the six-nation Contact Group in London. However, with Russia opposed to any military action, strikes will not be on the Contact Group's agenda.

The Foreign Office official said it would be important to spell out Nato's demands to Belgrade. They will have to include, the official said, complete compliance with the October peace agreement reached with Richard Tolbrooke, the American special envoy, including the withdrawal of most of the Serbs to their barracks, thus ending the expul-

sion of an aide to the ambassador.

Mr Walker, with 37 years of foreign service and experience of angry Serb minorities from Croatia, must know, however, that he has embarked on a risky course. He was meant to have left Yugoslavia by 8pm, after the authorities had extended his stay by 24 hours, and his office has been inundated with threatening telephone calls from Serbs.

The previous evening, Mr Walker had entertained the international press corps in Pristina, and laughed off suggestions that the event should be called "the last supper".

He said he had the full backing of all 54 nations in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and had received many letters of support for his defiance of President Milosevic's Yugoslav regime.

"I've had a letter from Kofi Annan, and I guess that kind of represents the world," he said. Afterwards he was forced to leave the restaurant by a back exit as Serb skinheads lingered menacingly in



William Walker outside a Yugoslav barracks yesterday near the northern town of Podujevo as he took journalists on a tour of army positions

The controversy overshadowed the arrival in the Kosovo capital of Finnish forensic scientists, who began their examinations of the Albanian bodies forcibly removed by police from Racak mosque on Monday. The Finns have portable X-ray machines to study bullet

wounds — equipment that had not been available locally. Helena Ranta, the team leader, said that within ten days, the Racak mystery could be cleared up.

Mr Walker's persistence was matched by that of the police, who continued another

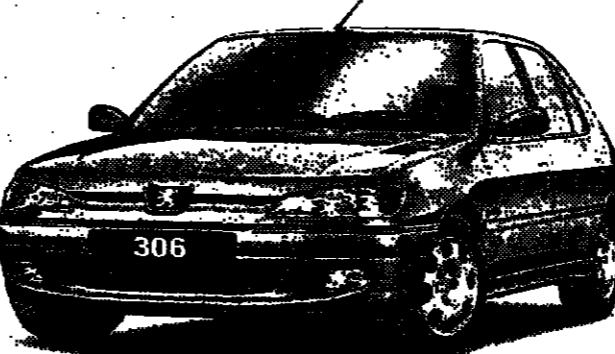
offensive in the north of Kosovo on the outskirts of the industrial town of Mitrovica. The streets of Sipolje village, long deserted as hundreds of officers in battle fatigues pushed back KLA guerrillas in neighbouring Vagacin and settlements to the southwest.

Reporters heard tank shells fired in the morning, and an army anti-aircraft gun was parked in the middle of Sipolje in the afternoon. There were no reports of casualties.

Police appear to have been flushing out a KLA cell they blame for the death of a col-

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Mr Okulate, with his wife Yegbeh, shows his passport to Sam Magai, his rescuer

Vultures rest near the national motto after feeding on corpses outside the State House in Freetown, where rebels continue to terrorise residents.

Briton escapes carnage

Wife without visa is left behind among drug-crazed killers in Sierra Leone, writes Sam Kiley in Freetown

A BRITISH construction worker who witnessed horrifying atrocities by drug-crazed youths when he was trapped behind rebel lines in Sierra Leone was rescued by militia men yesterday and flown to neighbouring Guinea.

His wife, Yegbeh, who endured the ordeal with him, was forced to stay in the country because she does not have a visa to travel on to Britain.

Destitute after being robbed, sweating from malarial fever and shaking in terror, Olumide Okulate, 39, from Hackney, East London,

emerged waving his British passport from his hiding place among shacks where locals had protected him and his wife. Wearing a pair of shorts and a T-shirt — his only possessions — Mr Okulate beamed as he was greeted by Sam Magai, a shotgun-toting member of the Kamajor militia, the only fighting force of Sierra Leoneans loyal to the democratic Government.

"I have seen things that you wouldn't even believe in a documentary," said Mr Okulate.

The son of a Sierra Leonean and Nigerian couple who emigrated to Britain before he was born, he was orphaned and grew up in care. He married Yegbeh in November last year, but was unable to leave Sierra Leone at Christmas because his bride did not have a visa. His Nigerian name and

British nationality were a potential death sentence when rebels entered the city on January 1.

"It was absolutely terrifying," he said. "They came in saying that they would not hurt anybody, and then they started killing at random. They burnt children to death on the street. They set fire to their homes and then forced them back in. People were shot like chickens."

The people around kept me from going out at all because I don't speak Creole and that would have given me away. For five days we just hid in a cellar in a neighbour's house while there was shooting and bombing going on outside."

As he spoke, his Kamajor saviours eyed groups of young men on street corners and whispered warnings that many were known rebel collaborators. Mr Okulate kissed his wife goodbye and was bundled into a jeep as the Kamajors cocked their weapons, fearful of ambush.

Passing a Kamajor checkpoint, Mr Magai, an agricultural student who has been wounded four times in battles with the rebels, issued new orders: "You find a rebel — no talking, just execute him. Don't let them multiply."

Safely back in a hotel, Mr Okulate was given water and food, his first for two days. "I am so glad to be out of the," he said. "Many of the rebels were out of their mind on drugs — cocaine and heroin. I don't know where they also much. They partied all night long and killed during the day. These are the most evil people on earth."

Given \$300 (£180) by a well-wisher, he then flew to Geneva, where he was met by British officials. His wife will join him when she gets a visa.

Scores of Sierra Leoneans were less fortunate. A convoy of 40, all with both legs chopped off by rebels, were driven into Connaught hospital. Locals said hundreds of rebels were hiding in shades of the main road — ready for Nigerian soldiers — were they were terrorising civilians.

Send mercenaries page 20

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Ray Chavunduka after being released in Harare yesterday
He told of electric shocks and near-drowning

Journalists freed after torture by Mugabe police

FROM JAN RAATH
IN HARARE

A NEWSPAPER editor and reporter were released from illegal military custody in Zimbabwe yesterday, bearing signs that they had been tortured by military police trying to force them to identify their sources for a report of an alleged coup plot.

Mark Chavunduka, 34, the editor of *The Standard*, and Ray Choto, 36, had bruises on their faces and swollen hands. Mr Choto's hands were about three times their normal size and had burn marks on them. He walked with a limp. As they left Harare magistrates court on bail of £810,000 (£155), they appeared to be in the final stages of exhaustion. Their eyes badly bloodshot.

According to Mr Choto's brief account as he left the court, he was intensively tortured with half-drowning, electric shocks and beatings for about 21 hours over two days. He said his interrogators told him that President Mugabe had signed his death warrant and that he would be tortured until he died. The details came at the end of a ten-day legal battle against the security authorities to release first Mr Chavunduka and then Mr Choto. They were illegally detained after their report last week that 23 soldiers had been arrested in December for inciting a coup.

Their interrogation, the case with which military authorities secured the collusion of other branches of the Government and their confident dismissal of High Court orders, establishes an alarming new direction in a country seized by economic crisis and widespread resentment over the Mugabe regime.

The violent reaction to *The Standard* report is seen as an indication that Mr Mugabe sees an attempted military coup as a real threat. Witness



Chavunduka in final stages of exhaustion

es have reported heavy armed troops guarding gates of army headquarters, and a significant increase in the number of sentries in combat uniform guarding Mr Mugabe's residence.

Mr Chavunduka spent 10 days in illegal military detention. Mr Choto had been hiding from military police until Tuesday, when he turned himself up to police. They handed the pair over to military police, who drove the blindfolded journalists to what is believed to be a secret police interrogation centre at Goromonzi, about 35 miles east of Harare.

Mr Choto said he had been rammed into a bucket of water to the point of drowning, and was allowed momentarily to gasp for air, or to be forced back into the water again. He was given electric shocks all over, including his genitals. Both men say they had managed to protect their sources.

Military police returned them to Harare police on Wednesday. The pair appeared before a magistrate yesterday, charged with threatening alarm, fear and dependency, and are due to appear again on February 22.

Leading article, page 21

Mexico V
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is fined
media rights

jailed

talks falter

dash kills 12

French isn't
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's first!

Mexico wary as Pope returns

WHEN the Pope arrives in Mexico today he will be welcomed from one of the world's great Roman Catholic nations, the enthusiasm of his reception will conceal the strain and sometimes violent relationship between the Mexican authorities and the church.

The visiting pontiff will address a crowd where foreign priests have been expelled recently for alleged involvement in politics. The Catholic Church has also been blamed for forming an armed revolution among Indians in the southern state of Chiapas. And Church leaders have spoken out against Mexico's human rights record, government corruption and the free-market economic policies many blame for worsening poverty.

The Government is so anxious about the political content of the Pope's public remarks that it has sent representatives to the Vatican in recent weeks in an apparent effort to soften the impact of his visit. But, much as in Cuba a year ago, official church sources say the Pope is unlikely to direct public speeches at his hosts. Instead, the issue of Chiapas will be reserved for a private meeting with President Zedillo.

Church under fire for political activities, writes David Adams in Miami

"We don't expect the Pope to make any direct comments in his public appearances," said Johan Flores, a spokesman for the Mexican Church's Social Pastoral Commission. Instead, his homilies are likely to address general issues affecting the Americas, such as human rights, violence and poverty. As for Chiapas, "he will raise it, but not in an incendiary fashion", Señor Flores said.

But any mention of human rights has special resonance in Mexico. Only last week the New York-based Human Rights Watch issued the findings of a two-year investigation. This found that Mexico can judges, prosecutors and law-enforcement officers collude to torture suspects; obtain evidence illegally

and block investigations into human rights violations.

For generations the Catholic Church was never officially recognised by the leaders of Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and it remained silent on important political and social issues. But, after winning official recognition in 1992, it has taken on a more activist role.

In Chiapas, wealthy, pro-government landowners and armed paramilitary groups have waged a virtual war on the Church since Zapatista rebels launched an armed uprising in 1994. Priests have been attacked for defending demands by Indian rebels for social justice.

A dozen churches have been closed and in some areas priests seldom walk about after dark or travel to more remote parishes for fear of ambush. Gunmen opened fire on a pastoral convoy carrying Bishop Samuel Ruiz of San Cristóbal de las Casas, whom the Government views as the spiritual leader of the Chiapas rebellion.

Instead of coming to the Church's rescue, the Government has sided with its critics, expelling six foreign-born priests accused of



A poster of the Pope at a bus stop in Mexico City heralds the pontiff's arrival today for his fourth visit to the country in 20 years

supporting the rebels. Msgr Ruiz hit back on Christmas Eve, issuing a scathing pastoral letter, forwarded to the Pope, that attacks "the madness of an economic model that devours a nation's wealth and concentrates it in few hands".

Mexico is where, 20 years ago, the Pope began his peripatetic pontificate. This is his 85th foreign trip, and it may be his last to this hemisphere. These days his speech is slurred and he is increasingly frail.

The official purpose of his visit is to attend one of a series of regional gatherings of bishops convened to set church goals for the new millennium. Most of the talk will be

either theological or on administrative issues, but the synod is expected to tackle thorny political issues facing the Church in the Americas.

They include the widening gap

between the rich and poor, the effects of global capitalism, and burdensome foreign debt. In Mexico, the bishops are likely to highlight

WORLD IN BRIEF

France is fined over media rights

Strasbourg: The European Court of Human Rights condemned France for violating the free-speech rights of the satirical weekly *Le Cauchemar*. The court found French courts had violated the European Human Rights Convention by fining the magazine F5,000 (£1,500) in 1993 for publishing tax forms of Jacques Calvet, then head of the carmaker Peugeot. An appeals court ruled in 1995 that the magazine had printed the tax form during a strike at Peugeot over pay, and the form showed M. Calvet's own salary had increased by nearly 50 per cent in two years. The European Court sentenced the French state to pay the weekly £10,000 in damages and £60,000 in costs. (Reuters)

\$8m raider jailed

Jacksonville: A Florida armoured car driver who stole a record \$8 million (£11.5 million) was jailed for 25 years for kidnapping and money-laundering. Philip Johnson, 35, pulled a gun on co-workers and loaded a van floor-to-ceiling with cash. He said: "I don't want more than £1 or £2 million for myself." He said he planned to use 20 per cent to help poor Central Americans and return the rest if his bosses stopped trading in the states. (AP)

Colombia talks falter

Colombia's largest left-wing guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, has suspended peace talks with the Government, demanding that the authorities dismantle the rightwing paramilitary death squads who have resumed a terror campaign. (Gabriela Gamini writes). President Pastrana said he regretted the premature end to talks, which he had hoped would become a central achievement of his administration.

24 die in religious riots

Jakarta: Rioters fired flaming arrows at places of worship and arrengangs blocked roads as violence among Christians and Muslims spread in eastern Indonesia. At least 24 people have died this week and almost 3,000 have fled their homes in Maluku province. The violence was the latest in a series of religious-related clashes amid social tensions caused by the nation's first economic crisis in three decades. (AP)

Taliban clash kills 12

Islamabad: Afghan tribesmen clashed with Taliban militiamen in a southern border city after they were stopped from playing a traditional game of egg fighting, leaving 12 people dead and two wounded, a private news agency reported. The fighting broke out in hot weather when tribesmen refused to obey a Taliban edict declaring the game, in which two participants each hold an egg and hit them together until one breaks, un-Islamic. (AP)

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The secret world of an embassy wife

No one suspected that Catherine Manning, for more than 20 years the perfect diplomatic hostess, was leading a double life.

Interview by Grace Bradberry

Catherine Manning, the wife of David Manning, the recently Ambassador to Israel, is that rare thing, a diplomatic wife happy to live in her husband's shadow. She has done it for 24 years now, apparently without complaint. But then, Catherine Manning has a dark and thrilling secret: she is an award-winning crime writer.

For 15 years, she kept this other life to herself. When in England, she would occasionally attend crime-writers' dinners, introducing herself by her nom de plume, Elizabeth Ironside. When on the diplomatic circuit, she would be queen of the canapés, mistress of the official crockery — "an English porcelain, white with a gold crest on it," she says, in her soft, trilling voice.

It was in Israel that this carefully structured plot unravelled. "I was still trying both to write and to be the Ambassador's wife, and I threw on a dress and went to a dinner. A woman asked me what I did. Eventually I told her. She said: 'Oh, I knew you were very busy because of the state of your hands.' She'd noticed that they hadn't been manicured. Of course, she had beautifully manicured nails."

Yet Catherine Manning is the sort of woman who would always look "well turned-out". We meet in a sparse, cream flat, within a grandiose apartment block in South London. Inside the vestibule, the succo work has been restored. In short, it's oddly like an embassy. Manning does not disgrace the setting. She looks as if she might have been born in a cashmere sweater similar to the one she is wearing.



SIMON BROOKS-WEBB

Catherine Manning: all the attributes of the ideal ambassador's wife — plus a talent for concealment and crime writing

their children. But as other wives fell pregnant, for Catherine that didn't happen.

"I couldn't have children," she says carefully. "It was a source of regret and, for a time, of real sadness. She began writing her first novel, set in India (her husband's second foreign posting), when she was 30. "We'd just bought a house and we were completely broke," she

says. "But I did it partly to pass the time, too." Her husband parcellled up the manuscript and sent it to an agent, picked from the *Artists' and Writers' Yearbook* for no other reason than that the surname began with A. The agent quickly placed the book, and *A Very*

Private Enterprise won the Crime Writers' Association first novel award.

Had she turned to writing to fill a void? "It might be that I started to write at a moment when really I should have . . . she begins. "I mean, I'd been married long enough . . . it

was quite clear that if I was going to have children, then I should have had them by then, and I wasn't going to."

One has to admire a woman who could respond to such a crushing discovery by becoming an award-winning novelist. During her husband's third posting — to Paris — she also polished off a history doctorate. Not the least formidable, and, frankly, rather shy, she is the kind of resourceful wife that Foreign Office mandarins must adore. "David is always very dedicated to his work," she says. "Which means you could spend your time twiddling your thumbs — or you could do something yourself."

The Mannings were in Moscow from 1990 to 1993. It was a scary period, though not, apparently, for Catherine Manning.

"They were the best years there since 1917," she says with glee. "During August 1991, when the coup took place, I walked every day with my dog down to the barricades."

They lived in a rented house with a KGB man on the door who noted every time one went in and out. Later, people were so concerned about security they would beg to have a policeman outside their door.

During this period she wrote her second novel, *Death in the Garden*, which was shortlisted for the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger award. Back in England, she completed her third, *The Accomplice*, mostly about Russia. Naively, she thought that her first stint as an ambassador, in Israel, would provide her best opportunity yet to get on with her writing.

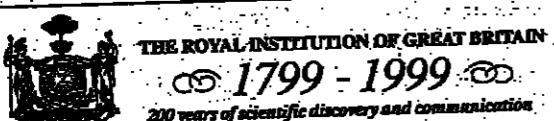
"I ought to have known better, but I started out thinking: 'This is wonderful. I'm going to an interesting country, to live in a lovely house, and

'I couldn't have children. It was a source of regret.'

lifers pointed out that, in today's world, merely writing books was not enough. You had to publicise them.

"I'd never had a launch party until I went to Israel. People just assume you're an ambassador's wife and that's it. It didn't bother me. But while we were in Israel, David gave a party for *The Accomplice*. He did it as a private person, and had invitations printed from David Manning, for the launch of Elizabeth Ironside's book. Lots of people came and realised that was me only when they arrived." She recounts this with the relish of a spy whose cover was never blown.

• *The Art of Deception*, by Elizabeth Ironside, New English Library, £5.99.



THE TIMES SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

In the first of a new series of lectures starting on Wednesday January 27, Dr Martin Westwell, a young chemist from Oxford University, will describe the war against superbugs. As well as explaining how antibiotics work, he will discuss the frightening prospect that, for the first time in the history of medicine, we have no weapons with which to fight the most deadly infections.

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susan Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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Starters for No 10

Many people think that just because Tony Blair promised his constituents in Sedgefield that his favourite dish is takeaway fish and chips, but has now also told compilers of *The Islington Cookbook* that he likes nothing better than "fresh fettuccine garnished with an exotic sauce of olive oil, sun-dried tomatoes and capers", then he must be some kind of shameless chameleon who changes to who whenever he happens to be with. Well, that's certainly what I think.

But this culinary misunderstanding has made Blair anxious about his image.

Or, as he put it to Frank Bruno at Downing Street cocktail party last night: "They're trying to stick me up good 'n' proper, ain't it. Frankie, makin' me out to be a Zelig of the food world, like in the 'Woody Allen movie, know wo' I mean, Harry?"

Before turning with his other face to Michael Caine, from whom he sought some moral support by pleading: "Mike, you know me mate, I'm jisnum 'n' dad — mad! — about our fish 'n' chips. But not a lotta people know dat."

But Tony understands that the days when people changed the way they spoke simply in order to blend in with whomever they were talking to are, like, so five minutes ago. That was last year's political fashion, which Tony seemed so flamboyantly on the Des O'Connor Show last June, when he told us all how he loves to play footie with "the kids" and how, on a half-day in France, "They put on a little show for us, with the mayor of the little village."

Then Blair got a pager message from Alastair Campbell explaining that everyone speaks Estuary English now, and the latest focus group findings showed that "you are what you eat" was the new mantra on voters' lips.

This is why — whereas American President might be followed around a crowded room by a pair of discreet bodyguards — Tony Blair, at his Downing Street cocktail parties, is accompanied by a pair of discreet waitresses. One carries a tray of food, the other a tray of

drinks. Approaching John Prescott, say, Tony grabs himself a half of Tetley's and a cheese-and-pickle bap. As he moves on to Kate Moss, Tony's already nibbling on a rocket leaf and sipping vodka and cranberry juice, swiftly swapping these for an asparagus quiche tartlet and a Malibu and blackcurrant when it's time to get the lowdown on the world of showbiz from *Supermarket Sweep's* Dale Winton.

Because of his hectic lifestyle, Blair now employs a full-time social dietician to orchestrate his schedule in a way that enables him to blend gastronomically with whomever he happens to be dining. If you would like to try the Blair diet as part of your new year makeover, here are a few examples of what Tony eats, and in whose company:

Paddy Ashdown: With Paddy, Tony makes a point of eating neither fish nor fowl, but something in between. Like Ashdown, Tony has this week vowed to hand over the responsibility of eating food to someone else — but not for six months!

Mike Tyson: Tony likes to take a bite out of Mike's ear.

Peter Mandelson: Tony tends to choose lobster, making sure the restaurant bill is sent to Geoffrey Robinson.

John Humphrys: Blair often joins the *Today* presenter in eating a Cabinet minister for breakfast.

Robin Cook: The evening frequently ends with the two of them rolling around the floor of Chevening's drawing room, empty brandy bottles scattered about them like bowling pins.

David Owen: Anything, as long as it's between 9am and 11.30am, or 5pm to 7pm.

Richard Rogers: Tony orders seabass — just so long as all the bones have been repositioned on the outside of the fish, and the whole dish is served under a spectacular glass canopy.

Gordon Brown: With Gordon, Tony is scrupulous about cutting the cake straight down the middle, but still somehow manages to end up with the bigger half. But, hey babe, that's the way the cookie crumbles, as Tony was telling his buddy Bill Clinton only the other day.

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AN010

Send in the mercenaries, Mr Cook

Sam Kiley on why the Sierra Leone leader must not fall

Robin Cook would rather we all forgot about Sandline. The Foreign Secretary does not welcome reminders of the role played by this mercenary outfit in Sierra Leone.

Sandline may have co-operated with British diplomats to help to restore the lawfully elected President Kabba to his rightful position as Sierra Leone's head of state. But, we are asked to believe, it was all without Mr Cook's knowledge. Sir Thomas Legg's inquiry cleared him of any wrongdoing, it seems. That, he hopes, is an end of it. Well, it shouldn't be.

Whether or not Sandline was implementing British policy then, it is quite clear that it should be now. The Foreign Secretary should learn from the events of last year. The redeployment of mercenaries in this blighted nation would be an act of genuinely ethical foreign policy.

Sierra Leone is once again teetering between democracy and criminal dementia. Charles Taylor, Liberia's President, is trying to take over the country with a mercenary group much more sinister than the London-based Sandline. He has hired 300 Ukrainians, along with other African dogs of war, in an effort to turn the nation into his private fiefdom.

Mr Taylor and his henchmen plan to get their hands on the country's enormously valuable resources of diamonds and rubies. They then propose to hand power to their creatures in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, is on death row in Freetown for his past atrocities. There is a lot of competition for the title of Africa's most malevolent militia, but in this crowded field the RUF stands out.

Mr Sankoh's sidekick, Sam Bockarie, is a former hairdresser and professional disco-dancer turned butcher. He joined the opportunistic RUF thugs when a lorry carrying volunteers drove past him while he was idling at an Abidjan bus stop four years ago. The antics of the RUF leaders, and their allies in the deposed junta forces, would be blackly comic in an Evelyn Waugh sense if they were not bleakly murderous on a massive scale.

Eastern Freetown has been razed by the rebels. Their scorched earth tactics and the staggering level of their atrocities blight much of this country. Yesterday the rebels were seen cutting off the hands of civilians fleeing their path. Refugees talk of wholesale slaughter by the rebels, piles of bodies in the streets, and all-night parrying by drug-crazed pre-teen killers. The rebels have to be stopped, and soon.

This is where Mr Cook can salvage a little honour from the Sandline affair. This week, while the British Government continued to put pressure on President Kabba to negotiate with the rebels, British forces have been keeping a weather eye on matters. A brigadier, David Richards, carried out reconnaissance in Freetown and has returned to brief Mr

Cook's Cabinet committee. He is likely to convey the message from both Mr Kabba and his West African allies in Econog, that a ceasefire and negotiations are out of the question while the rebels hold the diamond-rich East.

It is clear that jaw-jaw will not work if the rebels are allowed to maintain their grip on the diamond mines. The gems can be mined by anyone with a shovel. The rebels can generate tens of millions of pounds to fund their massacres. Talks while the rebels remain in possession of these resources will only strengthen the rebels' hands.

What the legitimate President and his allies need is air support to hit rebel bases from the rear. Without air support, Econog's armour and infantry can fight only a limited war of attrition, unable to strike behind the rebel lines.

It is in Britain's interest to see that air support, and additional military muscle, are supplied. We have a moral duty to maintain the President whose election we backed. But this crisis affects more than one country. If the Econog forces were to lose on the battlefields of Sierra Leone, a domino effect could harm the cause of progress throughout West Africa. Nigeria's own transition to democracy would be jeopardised.

Britain cannot help directly. It does not have the type of helicopter gunships that would be useful in Sierra Leone. It is, in any case, extremely unlikely that the Government would order Crown forces straight into an African bloodbath.

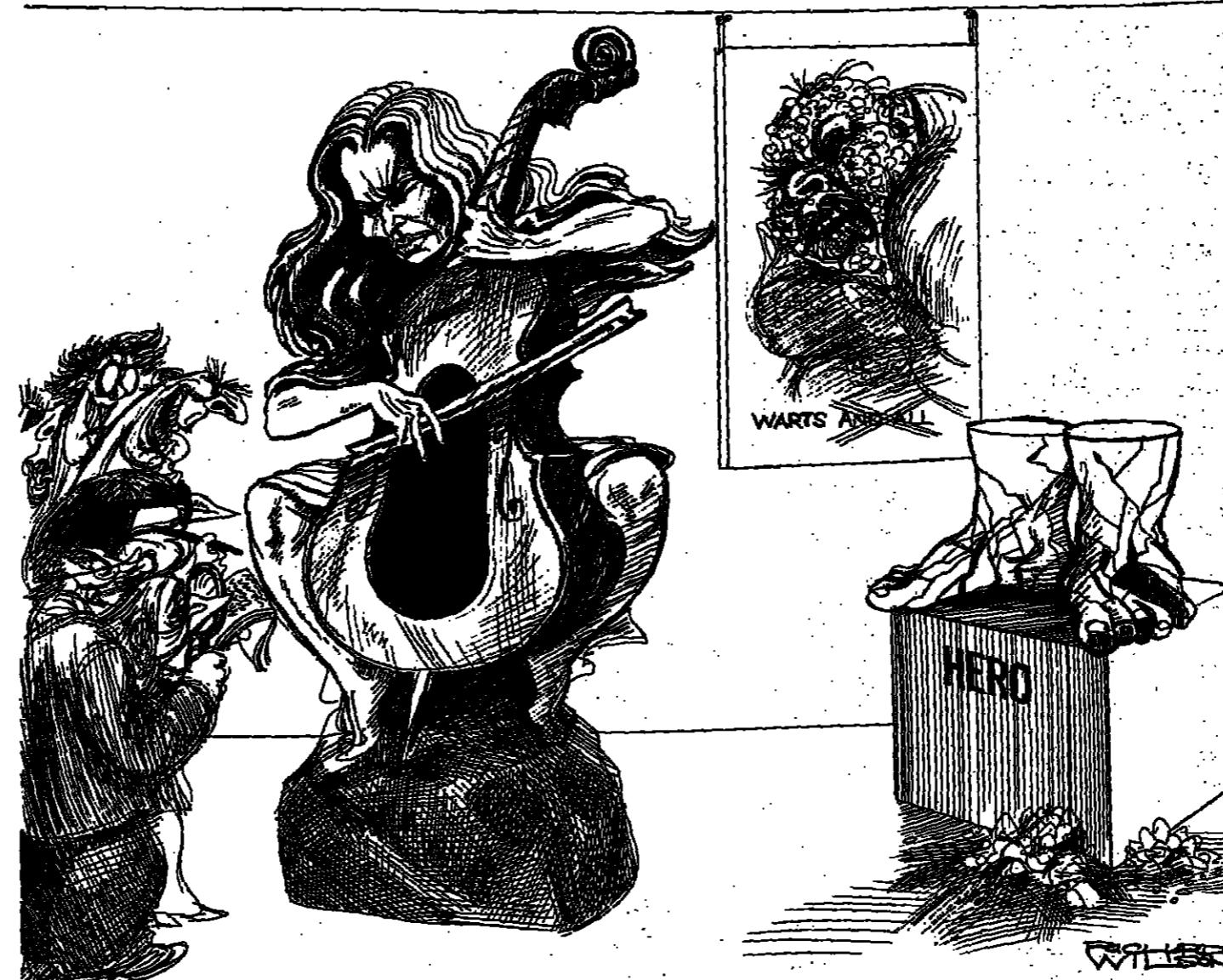
But there is an alternative. In 1997, President Kabba had almost routed the rebels with the help of Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary company. With 146 soldiers of fortune and one Mi-24 helicopter gunship, he had all but finished them off. But pressure from abroad forced the President to cancel that contract. As the mercenaries left, they predicted that Mr Kabba's rule would last 90 days. He was ousted after 80.

Britain, and her Western partners, can now help Sierra Leone by hiring a company like Executive Outcomes, Sandline, or any one of a number of British security firms operating in Africa. Such an organisation could bring those badly-needed helicopters to fight in Freetown and beyond. The Sierra Leone Government cannot afford to do so. In all honour, we cannot afford not to.

At no risk to British soldiers and equipment, Mr Cook can practise private-sector peace-keeping. He should authorise the deployment of mercenaries to help Econog to drive the rebels out of Sierra Leone.

That, after all, is what the Foreign Office thought was a good idea a year ago. This time one can only hope that Mr Cook learns from the past. Instead of trying to forget it.

comment@the-times.co.uk
Mary Ann Sieghart returns next week.



The camera often lies

'True story' films should carry a Mostly Untrue certificate from the censors

I can see it already. "Paddy and Jane" is the true but tormented tale of a soldier turned politician. This Wellingtonian figure is a man of dazzling but flawed genius. Told through the eyes of his former secretary, the film uses their affair as a metaphor of political turmoil. Paddy, portrayed by Kenneth Branagh, is caught between wife and mistress, Labour and Tory. Charles Kennedy and Tony Blair. He draws on his SBS training to survive each crisis. We are assured that the sex scenes are "courageous and explicit . . . intended to convey a deeper kind of truth". Ten provincial reps are closed to supply the Arts Council grant.

The film *Hilary and Jackie*, initiated by the sister of Jacqueline du Pré, is similar melodrama of rivalry and love. It is rescued from sentimentality only by Emily Watson's acting and frequent mercy dashes by Elgar. Whether the remorselessly unpleasant scenes are all true cannot be judged, since du Pré is dead. Most of her friends and admirers believe she has been defamed by an angst-ridden sister and brother-in-law. Certainly any shred of dignity or niceness has been edited out. This being a film, much is made of sex and the whole confection is called "true", a word almost devoid of meaning in movies. The film was incomprehensibly subsidised by the British taxpayer.

This is a road much trodden, and much littered with cant. Scholarly pens are sharpened over *Shakespeare in Love*, a film of Tom Stoppard's charming fiction that a randy Elizabethan poet called William Shakespeare had written's block during a play called *Romeo and Juliet*. From this he was deliciously rescued by Gwyneth Paltrow, leaving us for ever in her debt. There is no evidence that any of this happened, but so what?

Stoppard makes no claim to veracity. Nor does the dazzling designer-Tudor florist, *Elizabeth*, currently on general release. Some myths are invulnerable to correction.

There is no evidence for half of history, and even less for the hack history of the film industry. *Gandhi* was a travesty of the British Raj. *Amadeus* was not about the real Mozart. *The Music Lovers* was not about the real Tchaikovsky. Closer to our time, Oliver Stone's *JFK* gave a false account of the killing of Kennedy. Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* was a false account of the Guildford Four. The

"true" portrait of C. S. Lewis in *Shadowlands* was mostly fiction. The "true story" of *Schindler's List* was unrecognisable to those who were present at the scenes depicted. The whole genre of docudrama of faction, reconstruction and "based on" stories, treats real people and incidents as a mere raw material for directorial fancy. Yet such is the power of film that these versions will determine for ever how most people view their patch of history. Sir Thomas More will always be the *Man for All Seasons*.

The film-makers

blow a raspberry to any complaint. We are artists, they cry. We can use facts any way we like. They are slaves to our talent, worker bees to be exploited and discarded. The monstrous regiment of historians, fact-checkers and pedants can get lost. Art need recognise no laws but those of its own genius. "What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth." Or as Keats would have said today, you can whinge, we have the Arts Council grant.

I once wrote an article in which I unwittingly told an untruth about a public figure. I had suggested that he was present at a meeting when he was not, and thus wrongly attributed to him an unworthy decision. The accusation was not new. But it was wrong. Both the law and the code of practice required me to apologise and make amends.

Even when racing the clock, journalists must build on a foundation of truth. I might have dismissed the complaint on the ground that mine was a work of art. I might have pleaded that my prose strove not after a spurious and small-minded accuracy, but after the "divine melodious truth" of the nightingale that is forever Fleet Street. I would have been carried off to the Clinic.

Cariton was recently fined an

astonishing £2 million by the Independent Television Commission for including fabricated material in a documentary on drug trafficking. "The deception," said the ITC, "involved a wholesale breach of trust between the programme-makers and the viewers." The company did not disagree, gulped and paid up. Film journalists who make offerings at the altar of history are tested by stern standards. Not so feature film-makers. I venture to suggest that if Cariton had sent its work round to

Cariton documentary. They used fabricated scenes and dialogue, intercut with documentary footage, to imply as fact what they knew was fiction. Such falsity was said in both cases to be avoidably propagandist, to expose the falsity of others. These artists demand a licence to expose the lies of others. This is the ultimate *trahison des clercs*. In my view the same goes for the portrayal of du Pré as a genius of unredeemed nastiness.

When art has exhausted its imaginative powers and has to borrow real people from real life, it should accept the disciplines of history and journalism. These are not only the laws of libel, but codes and protocols of accuracy, fairness and respect for the dignity and privacy of individuals; both living and dead. Of course journalism often falls far short of these disciplines, but it at least acknowledges a framework of self-discipline. Filmmakers respect nothing. Constrained only by laws against defaming living persons (letting Daniel Barenboim off the *Hilary and Jackie* hook), they can live with impunity and without redress.

Art's rejoinder to this purism is to cry Censorship! It depends what we mean by the censor, a wolf who comes in many disguises. The ITC was censoring Cariton in fitting it for its drugs story. The laws of libel and racial and religious discrimination are censorship. So too are those controlling copyright, advertising and public deception. On this basis alone the British Board of Film Classification should surely demand the removal of the words "true story" from films which are blatantly nothing of the sort. At very least, it should have a new *M*ostly *Untrue* certificate, meaning *Mostly Untrue*.

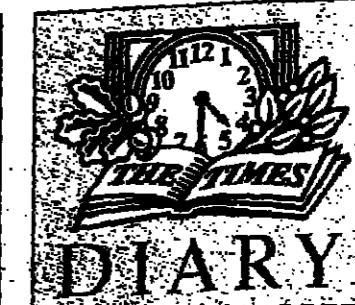
Yet censorship is not the best defence against artistic mendacity, it is the worst. The best defence is to proclaim its lies from the rooftops. By all means let Hilary give her version of her sister's sad tale, if she must. By all means add in the sex, the profanity, the terminal illness and Elgar's Cello Concerto, if they are the only means to an audience. By all means call the product art. But the rest of us need not stand on the ceremony of that art. Truth comes first. If film-makers claim a licence to damn the living and the dead, they must get damnation in return.

comment@the-times.co.uk

Simon Jenkins

fictional Washington *Behind Closed Doors*; not the many films depicting Nixon as a monster and purporting to tell "the truth". Admirers of du Pré know that the most moving evocation of a musician's struggle against multiple sclerosis was in Tom Kempinski's fine play, *Duet for One*. For all the interviews given by the makers of *Hilary and Jackie*, their motive is unclear. If it was meant as a fictional study of the agony of genius, why drag a real person's character through the mud? If it was to be a biography of du Pré – as it seems to the public – surely there was some obligation to accuracy and balance?

When art thus moves its tanks on to the lawn of truth, the defenders seem to turn and run. The so-called drama documentaries by Stone and Sheridan were far more culpable acts of public deception than the



Baby reds

BABY BALLS are to be taken to the heart of the Labour Establishment. Its most glamorous couple are about to embark on the founding of a dynasty. Yvette Cooper (right) wife of Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's sharpshooter, is expecting in June.

The MP is the latest "Blair babe" to reproduce. She follows Claire Curtis-Thomas, Debra Shipton, Jacqui Smith and Ruth Kelly (left). Yvette purrs: "This year is going to be big for Ed and me. We are really pleased. The only problem is I couldn't drink much over Christmas to celebrate."

Ever a power person, Cooper has told her local party she will campaign in the European elections until she drops. Poor baby.



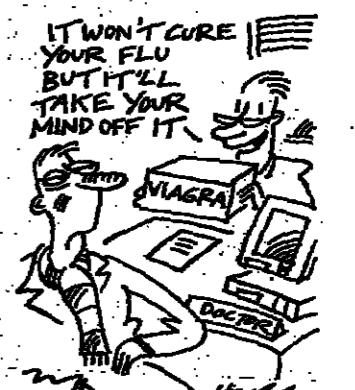
• **KATE THORNTON** of Top of the Pops pedigree has attacked gentle Cheltenham. She suggests that the twee spa town is really home for white trash. "Not being pregnant by 14 made me stand out," she says. "I suffered bullying. When I go back home I drive past those people in my nice car. I see them pushing their buggies and I think 'Well, who's the smart one?'."

Tory benefit

KNOW a Conservative in need? A fund for distressed Tory folk is being wound up by Sir Archibald Hamilton's 1922 Committee. The search has started for worthy final recipients and as the party lost 171 seats last time there could be a few takers. The fund was established in 1975 to help former Tory members and their surviving spouses who find themselves in difficulty.

Marion Roe, MP, chief pension officer, says: "The House has its own arrangements now. We are looking to distribute the balance, so anyone who knows of worthy causes, contact us." Make the queue orderly now, please.

• **A PORTRAIT** of Hitler by that thirsty dog, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, is being flogged by his widow. It's a riot of missing features mired in yellow and blue. Lady Sam became chief beneficiary of Nicky's will on his deathbed, at the expense of his daughters. Lady S is to emigrate to Mexico having enjoyed a stint in a drying-out clinic. Life threatens to be economical: the work should raise £60.



Euro stars?

WILL the Ashdowns join that other couple in Brussels who never made it, the Kianocks? Tony Blair, I hear, has suggested to Paddy that should he want Sir Leon Brittan's job at the Euro Commission, it is his. Although one of the Brussels structures normally goes to a Tory, it is not obligatory.

Also uncertain about his future is Alan Beith. He has campaigned discreetly to replace Betty Boothroyd as Speaker. After Wednesday's news, he made it clear that "now is not the time" to discuss the succession – code, I feel, for "I'm mad for it".

• **UNLIKELY cronies** Alan Clark tells me he "adores" that gentle soul Alastair Campbell and thinks "he should be PM". Well, he almost is. The admiration is returned. Campbell has been heard to say that he knows what the Tories think as he has "spoken to Al – the only one with a brain".

Odd couple

SHOULD be fun to see how Lord Wakeham and Gerald Kaufman rub along on the Lords Royal Commission. The two clashed a year ago, when Gerald ventured that John was a "sauvage" while Wakeham said the MP was "an expert at offensive remarks".

JASPER GERARD

'Proud, patriotic, high-minded and diligent – unmistakably British down to his bowler hat and blazer'

Defining what makes Brits British is the latest trivial pursuit for politicians. An historical criterion for Britishness uses things that we are all supposed to do together, such as bumping on horseback after foxes, despising the French and hating the Pope. We might call this the unification principle. But its flaw is that today at least as many Brits shudder at fox-hunters, admire the French and revere the Pope.

A better criterion for Britishness is the insularity principle. This selects the things that Britons do that nobody else in the world would dream of copying, like cold baths in midwinter, regimental blazers with brass buttons and opening the bedroom window at night, especially when there is a freezing gale. Such as:

1. Bread pudding. We find this mess of bread, hot milk, and

cloves essential for eating with birds. Nobody else in the world agrees with us.

2. There are many similar national delicacies that define Britishness: Marmite, kippers, plum pudding, fish and chips soaked in vinegar, mushy peas, bloaters, mint sauce with lamb, "Gentleman's relish" and all other such fish pastes, pork scratchings, powdered custard, digestives biscuits half covered in chocolate.

3. Lesser breeds celebrate Christmas with *foie gras* and oysters. Chateaubriand and venison, and other unseasonal foods. Americans eat their native bird for Thanksgiving, cooked with style and cranberries. Only the British follow for Christmas with chipolata sausages and Brussels sprouts.

4. Only the British guzzle Brussels sprouts. Not even the

Belgians will touch them.

5. It is a cliché that Britons drink beer at warmer than room temperature while standing up. But if we do secure a stool at the bar, it is our custom to spread our elbows and conversation to block anyone else from approaching the bar to give his order. More

authoritarian countries would arrange to serve beer at tables, or at least palm off of the bar red to keep it clear for orders.

6. Of course Britons invented team sports and games. Other nations are better at them today. A surprising number of them play cricket. But we are unrivalled at the stupidity, cheating and venality of our sportsmen, the egos, bungs and incompetence of our sports administrators, and the tribal behaviour of supporters.

9. Other nations send their naughty children to boarding school and regard teaching as a noble profession. The British send away their richest, most privileged and most socially upwardly mobile little darlings.

10. Only the Brits would dream of wearing bowler hats (mainly in Ulster these days, with rolled umbrella). Ulster, scratchy tweed knickerbockers, green (now yellow) wellies, club ties of distasteful colours such as MCC, and collar pins. These are all intended as marks of tribal distinction. They show that the wearer belongs to something, and more important, that you are excluded. Englishwomen wear tweed nightdresses to show that bed is for the serious business of snoring on a hot water bottle, not for decadent continental hairy-pants.

It is at best the Briton can be high-minded, diligent, patriotic,

دعا و ملحوظ



THE POTENT TAXPAYER

Viagra sparks a welcome debate on who pays for what

A diamond-shaped blue pill has stimulated a long overdue debate about the National Health Service. By proposing that the anti-impotence drug Viagra should be restricted to men with serious disabilities, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, has implicitly accepted what others have long acknowledged: treatments provided by the NHS need to be rationed by means beyond that of the waiting list. A Health Secretary is now openly meddling with doctors' freedom to prescribe according to clinical need. He is limiting patients' universal right to free treatment. For this Mr Dobson deserves praise. Instead of protesting, the medical profession should help Mr Dobson to devise new, fresh ideas about how to fund the NHS and meet public demand.

A worthwhile debate demands candour. As recently as Monday Mr Dobson stated that treatment is given "according to individual need, not a preordained entitlement" — a view to which yesterday's decision runs counter. Doctors should acknowledge that, as there are not limitless resources to fund the NHS, setting priorities is necessary. The question is who should set them, and on what terms? Are contraceptives, or treatments to tackle obesity, to be classed as "lifestyle drugs", despite the public and medical good they may bring? And who is in a position to ordain that a man with six months to live should not be given an expensive new drug that might give him another year of life on the ground of cost alone?

These decisions are already being taken in a confused, chaotic manner and behind closed Whitehall and health authority doors. So-called "postcode prescribing", where a treatment is available under one health authority but not another, appears to be an established practice. In East Norfolk, doctors are allowed to prescribe a drug for motor neurone disease that can

prolong sufferers' lives by three to six months. In neighbouring Suffolk, patients have to pay for it themselves. Universality of provision may be a good political catch-phrase but it rings hollow in a growing number of regions.

The emergence of new drugs and the genetics revolution threaten to exacerbate this problem. The Government hopes to pass other difficult decisions to the new National Institute for Clinical Excellence. This body's task is to iron out inconsistencies in health provision by judging whether new drugs should be available on the NHS on the grounds of efficacy, and then provide national clinical guidance. While national guidelines will be welcome, decisions affecting patients will be taken by remote government advisers, not doctors or surgeons. Ministers cannot expect that this new quango will address the fundamental *commodum: however much taxpayers' money is spent on health, the public's expectations will never be met. Rationing cannot be addressed by ministers wondering "how can we provide the best service?" Instead, they should be asking "What is the public prepared to pay for and how?"*

Mr Dobson should consider health systems in other countries, where people are required to pay for some or all of their treatment depending on medical need: serious illnesses are treated free, while inessential drugs must be paid for. The Government should encourage individuals to take more responsibility for their own well-being by encouraging private medical insurance. In a more transparent system, where people are insured against misfortune, the prospect of paying for prescriptions is less likely to provoke such dismay. So long as the public is shielded from the true costs of treatment, the demands on the NHS will go on soaring, leaving Mr Dobson impotent to respond.

JUST JUDGES

Zimbabwe's courts take liberty's side against torturers

The illegal detention and torture of two Zimbabwean journalists by the military is chilling. The Government of President Mugabe has never been tolerant of dissent. But it seems increasingly ready to use unlawful intimidation against its growing number of critics. Yet the journalists' appalling treatment has also elicited vigorous protest from churches, unions and intellectuals and brought out the best in the country's civil institutions, notably the courts. Mark Chavunduka, the Editor of Zimbabwe's leading independent newspaper, *The Standard*, and Ray Choto, a senior *Standard* reporter, probably owe their lives to the perseverance of their publisher, Clive Wilson, and their lawyer, and to the determination of two brave judges to uphold the law.

The two men still face trial, under a section of the 1960 Law and Order Maintenance Act framed under white rule with the express purpose of suppressing freedom of speech, for causing "alarm and despondency". All charges should now be dropped. The journalists have been subjected to hideous tortures, including electric shocks, burns, beatings and the "submarine" method of water suffocation. The accuracy or otherwise of the *Standard's* news report, by which both stand, that 23 soldiers had been arrested for inciting others to a military coup is a minor matter compared with the flagrant contempt of court shown not only by the military who detained them, but by Moven Mahachi, Zimbabwe's powerful Defence Minister.

Under Zimbabwean law, civilians suspected of an offence can be arrested only by the police, who must grant them access to a lawyer and their family and produce them in court to be charged within 48 hours. Last Thursday, two days after Mr Chavunduka

was detained by the military and held incommunicado, Judge George Smith ruled in the High Court that the military had no jurisdiction over him and ordered his release. The Defence Ministry refused, handing him over to police custody only on Monday, after Judge James Devitt announced that if he was not brought to court, he would order the arrest of Mr Mahachi and his principal aide that night. When Mr Choto then came out of hiding to give himself up to the police, the military seized both men and tortured them continuously for 24 hours in an attempt to force them to divulge their sources.

Mr Choto believed his torturers when they told him that the President had signed his death warrant. What all Zimbabweans believe is that Mr Mahachi, who is close to Mr Mugabe, would not have defied the courts unless he believed that he had the President's approval. Mr Mugabe keeps his Cabinet on a tight rein. Many will also believe that the news report must have had real substance to provoke so extreme a reaction. This has not been confined to *The Standard*: police in the southern town of Masvingo have arrested an officer of the feared Central Intelligence Organisation for beating up journalists in three news organisations. The ill-paid military's discontent, which common knowledge has been sharpened by its heavy casualties in the deeply unpopular Zimbabwean military intervention in Congo's civil war.

President Mugabe's only credible course now is to dismiss his Defence Minister, court-martial the soldiers concerned and drop all charges against *The Standard*. Unless he disowns this disgraceful act, he will be indefinitely associated with it, and his *de r閏ime* will become more unstable and threatening than it already is.

WORLD WIDE HONOUR

The new and lasting memorial of the Web

When they were buried, their memory was kept alive by the most enduring means known to man — with simple lettering in stone above their graves. Line after line of such headstone is ranged in French and Belgian war cemeteries. Where there was once mud, rubble and blood, there are now some of the world's most poignant resting places, where Commonwealth soldiers who fell in two world wars lie buried. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission promised that "their name liveth for evermore". But time and distance have separated families from the records of their long-fallen loved ones.

The commission has now made imaginative use of a new and unexpected tool for tracing and remembering those who fell, the Internet. Since the Debt of Honour Register was posted on the net just before Armistice Day, more than four million people have visited the site. The commission has been flooded with follow-up inquiries. In the first ten days alone, some 250,000 people from all over the world sought details of relatives and long-fallen friends. Interest has also been stimulated by the recent wave of books and films about the First World War, the moving interviews with the last members of the generation that fought in the trenches and the last November's commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the Armistice.

The Commonwealth War Graves Com-

mission has deservedly earned praise over the years for the meticulous care with which it tends the graves of 1.78 million soldiers who lie in 3,000 foreign fields in some 150 countries. When it was established, it took the early and controversial decision that in the remembrance of death all are equal. No family was allowed to purchase a larger plot, no Briton to have a better headstone than a subject soldier from the Empire, no officer to be marked out from his men.

The commission's Internet site has properly preserved this spirit. Each entry has the same format, dignity and accompanying history. Each upholds the promise to "defeat the oblivion of time". History best comes alive when it touches human lives. Family history is often lost in a modern world where neighbourhoods are more likely to change and younger generations less likely to keep in touch. Family Bibles are rarer and parish records less comprehensive. Yet the need to trace our roots is as strong as ever. So, too, is the yearning to unravel the mysteries of how missing relatives died and what happened to the uncles and grandfathers who went to war and never returned. Searches that used to take years are now possible in a trice; questions can be answered and pride in sacrifice rekindled. For this, as for its unstinting work in tending the dead, the commission deserves high praise.

Many Ugandans and Kenyans too,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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MEPs' power and will to censure the Commission

From Mr Roy Perry, MEP for Wight and Hampshire South (European People's Party Group (Conservative))

Sir, The analysis by William Rees-Mogg of the role played by Labour MEPs, most especially Pauline Green, in actually saving the present European Commission was particularly sharp (article, January 18; see also letters, January 16). Mrs Green indeed said at the very outset that she tabled a censure motion with the intention to vote against it. No one can be surprised that she ultimately applied the tactic of withdrawing her motion.

However, Mr Blair has another option to show whether he really believes Mme Cresson or Senior Marin have fallen short of the standards expected of them. Under Clause 160 of the Treaty of Rome the Council may apply to the European Court of Justice to compulsorily refer a commissioner. That is a power so far denied to the Parliament.

It is a pity that, unlike the European Parliament which is at least open in its processes, the Council of Ministers is totally closed and we need never know whether Tony Blair or any of the other ministers has the courage to make such a move.

Yours faithfully,
ROY J. PERRY,
Tarrants Farmhouse, West Wellow,
Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6DA.

From Mrs Pauline Latham
Sir, I was in Strasbourg for the whole of last week shadowing the Conservative MEP, Giles Chichester. I witnessed at first hand not only an MEP's way of life but also what happened during the week, culminat-

ing in the vote on Thursday on whether to censure the Commission.

National governments did indeed put enormous pressure on their MEPs not to vote for the motion of censure. The Socialist group in the European Parliament, led by British Labour MEP, Pauline Green, withdrew rather than upset their friends.

The resolve of the Conservative

MEPs, led by Edward McMillan-Scott, did not waver. They voted for censure because they do not believe that fraud and mismanagement should be condoned.

I'm sure that, if voters think that our Labour MEPs are happy to sweep things under the carpet, they will re-examine their loyalties at the European elections in June and prefer to endorse the decisive, clear line on fraud demonstrated by the Conservative MEPs.

Yours faithfully,
PAULINE LATHAM
(Prospective Conservative European Parliamentary Candidate for the East Midlands,
Hurons Wood, Vicarage Lane,
Little Eaton, Derby DE1 5EA.)

From Mr Peter R. Wiles
Sir, The European Parliament had an opportunity to widen its powers and control over the Commission last week.

The Government is busy ensuring that we voters won't have the opportunity to vote for MEPs who may take a more robust line in future. Our best riposte is to let the next lot be elected at a turnout of under 10 per cent. Members of political parties might want to drag themselves to the polling booths to vote for their party's list, but

I can't for the life of me see why anyone else should bother.

Yours faithfully,
PETER R. WILES,
33 Pinewoods, Church Aston,
Newport, Shropshire TF10 9LN.
peter.wiles@icweb.com

From Mr Alf Lomas, MEP
for London North East (Party of European Socialists Group (Labour))

Sir, I agree largely with the article by William Rees-Mogg but, when he criticised Labour MEPs for voting against the motion of censure on the Commission, he might have mentioned that there were five who did not obey the whip.

Three Labour MEPs, including myself, voted for the motion of censure and two others abstained. Not many, I concede, but there are still a few free spirits left.

Yours sincerely,
ALF LOMAS,
Ground Floor, Queensway House,
275/285 High Street,
Stratford, E15 2TF.
January 18.

From Mr Norman Sheldene

Sir, The British Government should immediately stop all financial payments to the Commission until such time as adequate controls are in force.

The problem would soon be resolved, especially if other similar-minded countries follow our lead.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH CALVER,
Editor, *The Professional Nanny*,
Bracken, St Catherines,
Hook Heath, Woking,
Surrey GU22 0HW.
January 19.

Voluntary code to check on nannies

From the Editor of
The Professional Nanny

Sir, Before their experiences with a bumbling Australian nanny, "Why parents must be wary", January 19, Joe Joseph's family had employed a "string of wonderfully reliable" nannies and this one's immediate predecessor had been "brilliant". However, it was the problems of this one nanny that merit publicity — good nannies are simply not newsworthy.

The Government's newly announced voluntary code will only go some way towards boosting nannies' status. A Kiwi mark will be awarded to agencies which guarantee to interview nannies *face-to-face* and check their CVs and references — formalising a procedure many agencies already insist on and good nannies that are more than happy to submit to.

The fact remains that many parents still either do not use agencies or employ inappropriate forms of childcare, such as an au pair or mother's help, to do a nanny's job. When something goes wrong the press is once again full of "nanny from hell" stories.

This does not, of course, diminish the sheer awfulness of the Sullivan case, nor of any other case where a child is damaged by her carer. Most nannies, however, see themselves as professionals and despair of the way in which their profession is portrayed in the media.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH CALVER,
Editor, *The Professional Nanny*,
Bracken, St Catherines,
Hook Heath, Woking,
Surrey GU22 0HW.
January 19.

Du Pré film

From Mr John Burgess

Sir, There needs to be no special pleading by Julian Lloyd Webber and his co-signatories on behalf of the late Jacqueline du Pré (letter, January 20; features, January 21). Her contribution to music is quite unsullied and fortunately available for all to hear: her sex life and character, although possibly colourful and flawed respectively, are not relevant to her musicianship or lifetime achievement.

However, musicians, particularly those with a high public profile, run the same risks as politicians in conducting their private lives. They should beware of the risks they run and either moderate their behaviour, or take the appropriate precautions to ensure continuing confidentiality.

I remain, Sir,
yours faithfully,
JOHN BURGESS,
65 Ham Close, Holt,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA1 4PY.
jburgess@blight.force9.co.uk
January 20.

From the Chief Executive of Film Four Ltd

Sir, Julian Lloyd Webber and others object in their letter today to the portrayal of Jacqueline du Pré in the film *Hilary and Jackie*. This organisation co-financed the film, and our records indicate that four of the six signatories have not actually seen it.

I would suggest that people make their own minds up as to the quality, success and, in particular, tone of the film rather than be swayed by the prejudices of others.

Yours etc,
PAUL WEBSTER,
Chief Executive, Film Four Ltd,
124 Horseferry Road, SW1P 2TZ.
January 20.

After Ashdown

From Mr Rhodri Morgan, MP
for Cardiff West (Labour)

Sir, Following the departure of Paddy Ashdown as its leader (reports and leading article, January 21), can we expect that the Liberal Democrat Party under his successor will change its policy of "constructive opposition" to the Government to one of destructive co-operation?

Yours,
RHODRI MORGAN,
House of Commons.
January 21.

Chambers wit

From Ms Helen Grayson

Sir, My favourite entry in *Chambers* letters, January 12, 18, and 19 is the one for Japanese cedar: "A very tall Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) often dwarfed by Japanese gardeners."

Yours faithfully,
HELEN GRAYSON,
39 St James Terrace,
Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5QT.
pcawfield@compulink.co.uk

From Mr Adam Ogilvie-Smith

Sir, My edition of *Chambers Dictionary* notes that a picture restorer is someone who "cleans and restores and sometimes ruins old pictures".

Yours faithfully,
ADAM OGILVIE-SMITH,
Hyde House, Longworth,
Oxfordshire OX13 5HH.
January 21.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 21: The Prince Edward, President, The Children's Film Unit, this afternoon attended a Lunch at Saachi and Saachi Cause Connection, 80 Charlotte Street, London W1.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 21: The Princess Royal, Colonel, The Blues and Royals, this morning visited Hyde Park

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal will visit Philip Carr Marketing, Long Rock, Perrance, Cornwall, at 10.00; will visit the Humphry Davy School, Coombe Road, Penzance, at 10.45 and will open new buildings, St. David's Hospital, St. Michael's, Trellisick Road, Hayle, at noon; will open the Centre for Foundation Studies at Cornwall College, Pool, Redruth, at 1.15; and will visit Classic Cottages, Leslie House, Lady Street, Helston, at 2.30.

The Duke of Kent, as president, Royal Institution of Great Britain, will attend the evening discourse by Professor Susan Greenfield at 21 Albemarle Street, London W1, at 8.00.

Robert Armitage

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Robert Armitage will be held at Christ Church, Chelsea, on Thursday, January 28, 1999, at noon.

Dinners

Institute of Physics
Sir Gareth Roberts, FRS, President of the Institute of Physics, presided at the annual awards dinner held last night at the Savoy Hotel. Mr David Pomer, Chairman of Pisces, was the principal guest and speaker. Afterwards the president presented the institute's medals and prizes for 1998 to:

Professor G.E. Bacon, CPhys, FInstP; Dr J. Fordham, CPhys, MInstP; Professor J.E. Harris, RoyMetSoc, CPhys, FInstP; Dr T.G. Harvey, CPhys, MInstP; Professor P.L. Knight, CPhys, FInstP; Professor C.H. Lewellyn Smith, CPhys, FInstP; FRS; Ms A. Macdonald, CPhys, FInstP; Professor I.C. Percival, FRS; Dr J.A. Scott, CPhys, FInstP; Mr R. Watson.

Honorary Fellowships were bestowed upon Professor A.J. Leggett, FRS, and Sir Roger Penrose, FRS. Among others present were Lord Rivers, FRS, and Lady Rivers, Lady McCarthy, Sir David Davies, and Lady Davies, Sir Roger Elliott, FRS, and Baron King, FRS, and Lady King, FRS. Dr. S. L. Adler, Michael and Lady Moore, Lady Penruce, Sir Brian Pippard, FRS, Sir Richard Sykes, and Dr Denis Wilkinson, FRS, and Lady Wilkinson.

The Master of the Company of Scientific Instrument Makers, the President of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft, the Chief Executive of EPSRC, the President of the Institution of Chemical Engineers, the Chief Executive of the Institution of Acoustics, the President of the Geological Society, the First Consul at the German Embassy, the Director of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Executive Secretary of CSTL, the Director of the Royal Institution, the Chief Executive of PPARC, the President of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Chairman of Saxe British Science, the President of the Institution of Civil Engineering, the President of the Royal Society of Engineers, in Medicine, the President of the Institute of Measurement and Control and the President of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Securitas Institute
Mr Graham Ross Russell, Chairman of the Securities Institute, presided at a dinner of the institute held last night at the Charterhouse in honour of Mr Tim Nicholson, a former chief executive.

Chambers of Andrew Thompson & David Gay
The Chambers of Andrew Thompson & David Guy held a dinner in the Middle Temple on January 15 to mark the 90th Birthday of His Honour Thomas Dewar (January 3) whose health was proposed by Alan Tyrell, QC. His Honour responded and other members of chambers spoke.

Appointments

Sir Edward Heath, KG, MP, and Mr Richard Baker are to be Patrons of the St Albans International Organ Festival.

Barracks, Knightsbridge, London SW1.

Her Royal Highness, President of Patrons, Crime Concern, today attended the Fru Youth Action Luncheon, Prudential, 142 Holborn Bars, London EC1.

KENSINGTON PALACE
January 21: The Duke of Gloucester this afternoon visited AJEX Housing Association at AJEX House, Stamford Hill, London N16.

Birthdays today

Viscount Bearsted, 49; Miss Mary Hayley Bell (Lady John) Mills, playwright, 38; Mr Nigel Bean, boxer, 35; Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, 74; Lord Cottenham, 72; Sir John Cotton, former diplomat; 93; Sir Charles Davis, former Counsel to the Speaker; 90; Sir Simon Day, farmer, 64; Mr George Foreman, boxer, 51; Judge Ann Goddard, QC, 63; Miss Margaret Hall, head of design, British Museum, 63; Professor Cyril Hogarth, physicist, 75; Lord Hughes, 88; Mr John Hunt, actor, 78; Mr John Lockwood, 75; Mr Richard O'Connor, former company secretary, Post Office, 52; Sir Alfred Ramsey, former manager, England's World Cup football team, 79; Mrs Claire Rayner, writer and broadcaster, 68; Mrs Gillian Shepherd, MF, 59; Sir Michael Spicer, MP, 56; Mr William Sprat, former Headmaster, Leighton Park School, 78; Sir Hilary Talbot, former High Court judge, 87; Lord Wardington, 75; Sir Graham Wilkins, former chairman, Thorn EMI, 75.

Green Howards ask American rebels for their silver back

By PAUL WILKINSON

ONE of the British Army's oldest infantry units is seeking the return of lost regimental silverware, looted by American separatists during the War of Independence more than 200 years ago.

The Green Howards believe that part of the collection might still survive on show in the homes of descendants of the colonists who rebelled against King George III.

The regimental museum at its base in Richmond, North Yorkshire, contains nothing which predates the Revolutionary War, even though the unit was formed in 1688. It has now enlisted the help of an American lawyer to trace the missing silverware.

Roger Chapman, a retired naval officer who is the museum's development officer, said: "It would be nice if it could be traced and returned, but realistically this is just a research project to find out if it still exists and where it is."

The plate, vases and trophies, along with a payroll of \$800 silver dollars and chest containing the personal valuables of the officers, was in the regiment's baggage train as it forced its way through inhospitable marshlands in South Carolina. Known then as the 19th Regiment of Foot, it had only recently arrived in America as part of a force sent to relieve the garrison at Fort Star, north of the state capital, Charleston.

The present title was adopted in 1921, although it originated in the 1740s as a nickname when units took their names from their commanding officer. They were dubbed Howard's Greens after the green facings of their scarlet uniform tunic, to differentiate them from the 3rd Foot which also had a colonel called Howard. As the 3rd's facings were buff they became Howard's Buffs, later immortalised in the phrase "Steady the Buffs".

After the battle some of the

Admiral Arthur Phillip

The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, accompanied by Mr Sheriff and Mrs Brian Harris, attended the annual Admiral Arthur Phillip commemoration service held yesterday at St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside. Admiral Peter Gadsden, Chairman of the Board of Trade, and the Royal Naval Trust and President of the Australia and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, of Croydon, read the lesson. Mr David Wickham, Archivist of the Clothworkers' Company, gave an address. The Deputy High Commissioner for Australia was among those present. A luncheon was held afterwards at Grocers' Hall.

Meeting

Plumbers' Company

Mr Edward Hopkinson, Master of the Plumbers' Company, presented the Lili Sara Barber Memorial Gold Medal for 1998 to plumbing student Mr Peter Johnston of Carlisle College at a meeting held yesterday at Ironmongers' Hall. The Master also presented the Armed Services Award to the best student qualifying in plumbing, as recommended by the Commandant of the Royal School of Military Engineering, Chatham, to Lance Corporal T. Purasingham, of Duxford, Kentucky, 1975. U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN 1961-71, Pantanaw, Burma, 1909.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Francis Bevan, Viscount St Almon, Lord Chancellor 1618-21, London, 1561; André Marie Ampère, physicist, Lyons, 1775; George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, poet, London, 1788; August Strindberg, dramatist, Stockholm, 1849; D.W. Griffith, film director, Duxford, Kentucky, 1875; U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN 1961-71, Pantanaw, Burma, 1909.

English-Speaking Union

Lady Boyd was the speaker at an English-Speaking Union literary evening held last night at Dartmouth House, Barrow-in-Furness. Both winners also received the Honorary Freedoms of the Company.



An etching of a Green Howards grenadier dating from 1781 when the regimental silver was stolen



A reproduction ammunition pouch crest from 1781

BIRTHS

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DEATHS

William Patterson, founder and owner of the Bank of England, London, 1795; Charles Koenig, actor-manager, London, 1800; Sir Joseph Whitworth, industrialist and engineer, Monic Carlo, 1887; Carlo Pellegrini, cartoonist, 1899; Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of shorthand, Bath, 1877; Walter Sickert, painter, Bath, 1942; Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th American President 1963-69, San Antonio, Texas, 1973; The Accession of Edward VII, 1901; The UK, Irish Republic and Denmark joined the Common Market 1972.

TRADE: 0171 481 1982

Forthcoming marriages

Mr N.S. Archer and Miss E.M. Power

The engagement is announced between Diego, son of Mr and Mrs Stewart Archer, of Lymington, Hampshire, and Sarah, younger daughter of Mr Michael Power, of Cadley, Wiltshire, and Mrs Margaret Lucas, of Calstock, Dorset.

Mr C.J. Kenny and Miss C.M. Davies

The engagement is announced between Christopher, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Kevin Kenny, of Wimbledon, and Catherine, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Rodney Davies, of Barnes, London.

Mr D.R. Long and Miss C.M. Fenemore

The engagement is announced between David, son of Mr Roger Long and the late Mrs Long, of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and Camilla, daughter of Mr and Mrs Rodney Fenemore, of London.

Mr T.A. Mylne and Miss N.M. Hill

The engagement is announced between Thomas, son of the late Mr Robert Mylne and of Mrs Mylne of Ropley, Hampshire, and Nicola, daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Hill of Christchurch, New Zealand.

Mr M.J. Robinson and Miss F.E. O'Callaghan

The engagement is announced between Matthew, elder son of Mr and Mrs Michael Robinson, of Mitcham, Surrey, and Frances, daughter of Dr Timothy O'Callaghan and the late Mrs O'Callaghan, of Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees.

Mr J.A. Stallard and Miss K.A.M. Carté

The engagement is announced between Captain James Armstrong, the Royal Artillery, son of Major General Sir Michael Armstrong, of Wool, Dorset, and Nicola, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Carte, of Perth, Western Australia.

Mr R.H. Green and Miss K.A. Short

The engagement is announced between Hadley, son of Mr Roger Green of Bromley, and Mrs Anne Green, of Weston Colville, Norfolk, younger daughter of Professor R.V. Short, of Melbourne, Australia, and Dr Mary Short, of Cambridge.

Mr R.G.A. Hankey and Miss J.R. Bodger

The engagement is announced between Gerard, son of Mr and Mrs Victor Hankey, of St Helier, Jersey, and Jennifer, daughter of Mr and Mrs William Bodger, of Windmill Hill, London.

Marriage

Mr R. Miles and Miss L. Macdonald

The marriage took place on Friday, January 15, at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, Mayfair, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Macdonald of Lissadell, Ireland, and daughter of Mr and Mrs John Macdonald of Moreton, and Mrs Sylvia Vernon, of Wallasey, the Wirral.

Lieutenant R.P.H. Hutchins, RN, and Miss S.C. Hardwick

The engagement is announced between Richard, younger son of Mr Hugh Pilkington-Cushion, of Ery, Jersey, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs Christopher Allen, of Westerham, Kent, and Maria, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Stanislas Musynski and of Mrs Musynski, of Bilecote, Essex.

A reception was held at the Great Hall, Lincoln's Inn, and the honeymoon is being spent abroad.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880

PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982

FAX: 0171 481 9313

A father's purpose for his own son's memory. He will be punished if he tells the truth in court, and God will curse him if he does not. Please help.

BIRTHS

ANTEL - On January 7th 1999 to Karen (née Gordon) and Geoff, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

BECH - On January 7th 1999, to Steven (née Williams) and Andrew, a son, Joshua, a daughter, Tara Rebecca Charlotte.

BENNETT - On 19th January 1999 to Karen (née Brown) and Gordon, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

BLETH - On January 7th 1999, to Steven (née Williams) and Andrew, a son, Joshua, a daughter, Tara Rebecca Charlotte.

BROOKS - On 21st January 1999 at St Thomas Hospital, a daughter, Madly Anne, to Gillian and Jonathan.

CARREY - On January 19th 1999 in Birmingham, a daughter, Sophie, to Mark and Debbie.

CHARLES - On 21st January 1999 to Karen (née Gordon) and Geoff, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

COOPER - On 21st January 1999 to Karen (née Gordon) and Geoff, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

DAVIES - On 21st January 1999 to Karen (née Gordon) and Geoff, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

DEAN - On 21st January 1999 to Karen (née Gordon) and Geoff, a son, Willoughby Jasper Geoffrey.

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THE TIMES TODAY

FRIDAY JANUARY 22 1999

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TOP NEWS

South African role for Mandelson

■ Peter Mandelson was on course to make a dramatic return to his role as election strategist by travelling to South Africa and working for a smooth transition to Nelson Mandela's successor. The job would see the former Trade Secretary acting as special adviser to the African National Congress helping ensure the party's return to power and the election of Thabo Mbeki as president. Page 1

Doctors rebel over Viagra

■ Doctors were urged to prescribe Viagra freely over the next six weeks before the Government can impose rationing of the anti-impotence drug. In defiance of Frank Dobson's intention to curtail prescriptions from March, the British Medical Association said impotent men going to their GP should be able receive the anti-impotence pill on the NHS. Page 1

Hunt for children

Fifty Gurkhas joined the search in Hastings for the missing ten-year-olds Lisa Hoodless and Charlene Lunnon. Page 1

Crash misses school

A village primary school in Nottinghamshire came within a split second of disaster after an RAF Tornado jet collided in mid-air with a light aircraft. Page 1

IRA meeting anger

Victims of IRA atrocities expressed outrage at a Minister's decision to meet relatives of an IRA unit killed while attacking a County Armagh police station. Page 2

Casualty list

More than four million people have sought details of their relatives and loved ones in the two months since the names of those killed in two world wars were posted on the internet. Page 3

Amnesty's plea

Extradition to Spain is the only way to bring General Pinochet to justice because Chile is unlikely to put him on trial, Amnesty International told the law lords. Page 9

Liberal starter

The campaign for the leadership of the Liberal Democrats began in acrimony yesterday when Nick Harvey, one of the leading contenders, was accused of jumping the starting-gun. Page 10

Waiting for Monet

■ Temps were frayed and voices raised in the elegant surroundings of Burlington House as hundreds of Friends of the Royal Academy were forced to queue for a preview of the record-breaking Monet exhibition. The queue was four or five deep in places and snaked for hundreds of yards from the gallery. Many art-lovers had a wait of about two hours. Page 6



Senator Michael Sullivan, the former Governor of Wyoming, inspects a guard of honour after becoming the US Ambassador to Ireland.

Miners' rampage

Striking Romanian coalminers hijacked lorries and tore through barricades as police tried to block their march. Page 12

Kosovo defiance

The head of the international monitoring mission in Kosovo defied a Serbian order to leave Yugoslavia and took journalists on a tour of army positions. Page 13

Rebel horror

A British worker who witnessed horrifying atrocities by drug-crazed youths when he was trapped behind rebel lines in Sierra Leone was rescued. Page 14

Mexican wave

When the Pope arrives in Mexico to a rapturous welcome the enthusiasm will conceal the strained violent relationship between the Mexican authorities and the church. Page 15

Nelson under fire

Lord Nelson was criticised by Italian historians, who branded him a war criminal who had used "brutal, bloodthirsty methods" to put down a revolt. Page 16

Clinton passion

President Clinton called on an old Arkansas friend to mount the last, impassioned speech for his defence as the White House team cranked up emotion and rhetoric for a final attack. Page 17

TOMORROW

GRE bid: Royal & Sun Alliance, the giant insurance group, is poised to bid around £3.5 billion for its rival Guardian Royal Alliance. Page 25

Chief goes: Laura Ashley, the troubled retail company, lost its sixth chief executive since 1990 but gained the Rev Pat Robertson, the television evangelist, and former US presidential hopeful, as a non-executive director. Page 25

Sears decided: Sears accepted an increased offer of £548 million from Philip Green and the Barclay brothers. Page 25

Markets: The FTSE 100 shares index fell 83.30 points to 6022.3. The pound rose 0.41 cents to \$1.6518 and 0.09p against the euro to 70.12p. The sterling index rose to 9.6 from 9.5. Page 28

Snooker: Robin Hull, a former world junior champion, became the first player to miss the final black in a professional event with a maximum break available. Page 46

Pop: Like all beloved institutions, says Caitlin Moran, *Top of the Pops* should be cherished. Instead, it has become "dull yet grossly insulating". Page 34

Pop 2: On the eve of a new British Canadian band Barenaked Ladies talk about their rare combination of humour and creative excellence. Plus new albums. Page 35

Power: The BBC is giving the World Service a new image. But will this destroy its diversity? Page 39

Football: Nationwide is to sponsor the England team in a £15 million, four-year sponsorship deal with the Football Association. Page 48

Tennis: Greg Rusedski lost to Paul Goldstein, a qualifier from the United States, in the second round of the Australian Open, his third defeat in four matches this year. Anna Kournikova still has problems with double faults. Pages 46, 48

Athletics: Abel Anton, the world champion, will defend his Flora London Marathon title in one of the strongest fields ever assembled for the event. Page 48

Snooker: Robin Hull, a former world junior champion, became the first player to miss the final black in a professional event with a maximum break available. Page 46

Pop 3: Like all beloved institutions, says Caitlin Moran, *Top of the Pops* should be cherished. Instead, it has become "dull yet grossly insulating". Page 34

World brand: The BBC is giving the World Service a new global image. But will this rebranding destroy its diversity? Page 39

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY JANUARY 22 1999

Board concedes defeat after buyer raises hostile offer and bags 38% stake

Sears backs Green's £548m bid

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM
RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

SIR BOB REID, chairman of Sears, yesterday accepted an improved offer for the retail group worth £548 million — an increase of £29 million — from Philip Green and the Barclay twins, David and Frederick.

After a day of talks between the two sides, the Sears board agreed to accept 39p a share from January 1. Investments JIL, it was set up for the bid by Mr Green and the Barclays,

Adam Barclay, who is the son of David and chairman of

and had a 340p a share bid rejected last week. Some late buying in the market ensured that by the end of the day, JIL owned 38 per cent of Sears. It already had 23 per cent of Sears in the bag after acceptance by Phillips & Drew last week. The shares closed at 354½p.

Sir Bob said: "The increased cash offer of 39p per share represents a fair deal for shareholders and is in line with the board's strategy to return value to them."

Adam Barclay, who is the son of David and chairman of

JIL, said: "We are delighted that our increased offer has been recommended unanimously by the board of Sears. We consider that this decision provides both clarity to employees and certainty of a full value to Sears shareholders."

The deal is likely to mean that Sears directors will receive large payouts from their options, which, in most cases, are triggered by a takeover. David Daffy, finance director, was believed to be in line for as much as £1.5 million, while Roger Groom, the property director,

could collect up to £1.18 million. Derek Lovelock, head of the clothing business, could get £697,000 from his options.

Sears, which JIL will de-list from the stock market, owns the Freemans catalogue company, the Warehouse, Wallis, and Richards women's wear chains, the Adams children's wear chain, a property business and the *Creation* credit card business. Sears last week announced the sale of *Creation* to Banque Nationale de Paris and Coginova for £141 million.

JIL is believed to be considering continuing with the sale of *Creation*, and is understood to have held talks about the sale of Freemans with Otto Versand of Germany. N Brown, chaired by Sir David Alliance, is also extremely keen to get its hands on Freemans, which it made one attempt to buy from Sears.

Mr Green, who is chief executive of JIL, said yesterday that he had not pre-sold any part of the company: "I want to go and meet the management of each part of the company," he said, before making any decisions on what would be best for

them. He said that the price had been raised "to save all the uncertainty. We felt it was best to get an agreed deal."

JIL is being partly funded by Mr Green's wife Cristina, and by the Barclays, who own the Ritz hotel as well as *The Scotsman*, *Scotland on Sunday* and *Sunday Business* newspapers. The bulk of the financing comes from loans raised through BankBoston and the Bank of Scotland.

Mr Green's other business is Owen Owen, the department store company based in the North West, and the Mark One chain of discount fashion stores.

The terms represent a significant premium to the low of 140½p at which Sears shares traded in October. However, the shares traded at 32p as recently as June 1998. In 1995 the buoyancy of the retail sector and optimism about the outlook for retailers lifted the shares close to 76p.

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RSA ready with £3.5bn offer for rival GRE

By JASON NISST

ROYAL & SUNALLIANCE, the giant insurance group, is poised to bid for about £3.5 billion of rival *Guardian Royal & SunAlliance* after being told it has made the highest offer in the auction of the insurer.

The offer, priced at about 390p per GRE share, has topped rival bids from other interested parties such as Axa, the French group Allianz of Germany and AIG, the US insurance giant. The nearest offer was understood to have been no higher than 370p, a share. GRE shares were unmove at 354½p yesterday.

GRE asked Morgan Stanley, the US investment bank, to carry out an auction of the company after receiving formal approaches from various rivals last year.

The group decided the GRE could not continue in its current form — being smaller and more diversified than most rivals. It said it would announce the result of the auction by the end of this month.

RSA — which was itself created by a merger between Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance in 1996 — is to be given exclusive negotiating rights to conclude a deal, though it is not yet in a position to put an offer to shareholders.

Any deal would need to be financed by a rights issue by RSA of up to £2 billion. This might not be well received by the market, given that RSA shares have fallen from a high

of 808p last March to stand at 487p, down 11½p, yesterday.

The bid could also face a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and there would be concerns about job losses, which could be as high as 5,000 as RSA integrates GRE's general insurance business.

The market is also concerned about the problems RSA had in merging the Royal and Sun Alliance operations.

After the merger, the group had two chief executives, Roger Taylor and Roger Gamble.

This structure did not work

and both left, with Bob Mendelson being promoted from the US business to become sole chief executive of RSA.

The GRE board, led by new chairman, Sir Colin Chandler, may yet decide that none of the bids put forward give full value to the company. The alternative to selling the company in one go is for GRE to become sole chief executive of RSA.

A circular from HSBC Securities, the broker, published yesterday, suggests that GRE could be worth as much as 473p a share.

Axa has said it is interested in the general insurance business and Prudential is understood to be keen to buy other parts of GRE, including the burgeoning healthcare operation.

Neither GRE nor RSA would comment on what they called "market speculation" last night.



Nick Prettejohn played a key part in the reconstruction and renewal process that saved Lloyd's

On-Line pair sell £1m shares

By FRASER NELSON

ON-LINE, the internet games producer whose shares had soared 2,084 per cent this month alone, crashed back to earth yesterday — but only after its directors sold £96,000 of shares.

Michael Hodges and Clement Chambers, co-founders of the company, said they were forced to sell their shares at between 176p and 250p apiece to satisfy market demand.

The shares, which started the month at 124p, fell 144p to 129p yesterday and are expected to drop further today. Mr Hodges raised £240,000 in cash from disposing of 100,000 shares. Three weeks ago, the same stake would have raised £12,500.

Mr Hodges said Mr Chambers, who has sold a total of 26,000 shares, has agreed to exercise newly-granted share options — effectively hanging on to £246,000 in shares after passing the moratorium.

Bank loans at record level

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BANK lending to house buyers set a record in December, usually a slow month, suggesting that cuts in interest rates have breathed new life into the housing market.

The British Bankers' Association said the figures, showing a record £1.2 billion increase in net mortgage lending, were "remarkable". Separate figures from the Building Societies Association also tended to point to a revival in the housing market with mortgage approvals up in December.

Bank lending increased overall by £5.5 billion, far above the recent monthly average of £2.95 billion, the BBA said. The strength was not just in mortgage lending, with demand for credit from industry and commerce, particularly among property and construction companies, rising.

Their disposals were carried out on Wednesday, when On-Line shares hit their high of 273p. The deals were not announced until after the market had closed yesterday.

Mr Hodges and Mr Chambers own 65 per cent of the company's shares between them. It is now capitalised at £4.2 million.

BBA, but nevertheless December's rise was well above the recent monthly average of £1 billion, suggesting an element of genuine new demand.

Yesterday's figures from building societies were not as buoyant overall as those from banks, suggesting that banks may be gaining market share.

The BSA said that gross mortgage advances totalled £1.49 billion in December compared with £1.62 billion in November while net advances fell £120 million from £534 million.

Adrian Coles, BSA director-general, said that, given the scope for further interest rate cuts, borrowers might find the housing market particularly affordable this year.

Separate figures from the Bank of England showed that M4 broad money supply rose 0.8 per cent in December. The annual rate of growth fell to 8 per cent from 8.3 per cent, the lowest level since June 1995.

Sixth chief goes at Laura Ashley

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LAURA ASHLEY, the troubled retail company, lost its sixth chief executive since 1990 yesterday, but gained the Rev Pat Robertson, the well-known television evangelist and former US presidential hopeful, as a non-executive director.

Mr Robertson, who has extensive business interests, is believed to have been asked to join the board by John Thornton, the Laura Ashley chairman and a senior banker at Goldman Sachs. Mr Robertson is also believed to know Kay Peng Khoon, the chairman and chief executive of Malaysian United Industries (MUI), which owns 40 per cent of Laura Ashley. Dr Khoon is also to be a non-executive director.

Mr Robertson holds two million shares — equivalent to about 0.5 per cent — in the form of 400,000 American Depository Receipts.

Victoria Egan, who was chief executive for just five months, is leaving for personal reasons having found it difficult to settle in London.

Mrs Egan, who previously worked for MUI, took over from David Hoare, the company director who was asked to stabilise the company after the departure of Ann Iverson, the high-profile American who launched an ill-advised expansion into the US.

Mrs Egan will be replaced by Kwan Cheong Ng, a Laura Ashley non-executive director who runs the retailing arm of MUI.

The company revealed some disastrous trading figures yesterday. In the 24 weeks to January 16, like-for-like sales were down 13 per cent. Total sales were down 16 per cent.

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T109

Rise and fall of the Sears that Clore built

IT IS EASY to forget just how large Sears once was. Only a decade ago it was still Britain's leading retailer. Its 4,000 stores dominated many high streets and gave it even more outlets than the Post Office.

By comparison, the Sears that Philip Green and the Barclay brothers are buying is a sadly shrunken thing of just a few clothing chains and the Freemans catalogue business.

In its heyday, the British Shoe Corporation, a now defunct Sears subsidiary, sold as many as one in four pairs of shoes in the UK. It traded as Freeman Hardy Willis, Trueform, Lilley & Skinner, Manfield, Roland Carter, Dolcis, Bertie, Curteess and Shoe City.

Sears' menswear chains included Fosters, Hornes, and Your Price. Its women's clothes chains included Miss Selfridge, Wallis and Warehouse, all of which remain in the group. The company also owned Olympus Sport, and the jewellers Garrard and Mappin & Webb. Other names it once owned include Lewis's



Clore ran Sears in its heyday



Strong: damaged by Facia deal



Reid: chairman during decline

department stores, sold in 1988, and William Hill, the bookmaker, sold for £31 million in December of that year.

The decline of Sears arguably began many years before the current management joined the group. The true glory days were with Sir Charles Clore, the property magnate who

bought the J Sears (True Form Boot) company in 1954 and ran it, aided by his trusted lieutenant, Leonard Sainer, until his death 20 years later.

Sir Charles's legacy lived on in the company until four years ago through Geoffrey Maitland Smith. He was chairman for nine years until handing over to Sir Bob Reid in 1995.

ams, the childrenswear chain, which is still part of the group.

When he was succeeded by Liam Strong in 1992, the appointment was well received, and the shares rose. The honeymoon did not last long. The most damaging incident for Mr Strong, who finally left the group two years ago, came when Facia, the retail business built by Stephen Hinchliffe, collapsed and the leases on 350 shop units that Mr Strong had sold to Facia reverted to Sears. Other sales of businesses — notably to Philip Green — were viewed as badly timed.

Sir Bob's chairmanship of Sears saw it go into a sorry decline. An attempt to sell Freemans failed and a proposed demerger last year was pulled because it, too, would have failed. Selfridges, which was merged, has underperformed the market. Trading by what is left of the group has limped along. For once, calling shareholders — now able to exit Sears at 35p a share — "long-suffering" is not an overstatement.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM

Zeneca's shares soar on merger progress

By PAUL DURMAN

SHARES of Zeneca reached a new high of £29.33 during trading yesterday, as the former drugs arm of ICI took a big step towards completing its proposed merger with Astra of Sweden.

AstraZeneca — as the enlarged pharmaceuticals group will be known — is set to become Britain's fifth-largest company. Merger documents were issued to shareholders yesterday. The shares ended the day up 28p at £28.62, compared with a price of £18.60 in October.

Zeneca, said that the deal with Astra would create "a winning combination" and the third-largest pharmaceutical company in the world. The proposed company, which will report its results in dollars, has a stock market value of about £48 billion.

Sir David Barnes, Zeneca's chief executive, dismissed the chances of the deal being blown off course by a hostile offer for either partner. He said: "If someone is going to intervene, I would be the last to know. But do I regard it as a real possibility? No. I don't."

Yesterday's closing share price values Zeneca's stake at almost £6 million.

even before his share options are included.

Zeneca also said its trading performance for 1998 was in line with market expectations. US pharmaceutical sales were 21 per cent ahead, with Zestril becoming the most prescribed hypertension drug in its class. Sales of cancer drugs were also strong.

The agrochemicals division finished the year strongly. The specialty chemicals business, which is up for sale, recorded lower sales than in 1997.

Detailed third-quarter results, published for the first time, showed that the strength of sterling reduced Zeneca's underlying pre-tax profits by 4 per cent to £845 million after nine months of 1998. At constant currencies, profits would have been up 9 per cent.

Sir David, who is to be deputy chairman of AstraZeneca, said the full-year cost of the strong pound is likely to be about £130 million. He said that profit would have been about £300 million higher but for the rise in the pound over the past two years. Tom McKillop is to be the company's chief executive.

Zeneca's shareholders will be asked to approve the deal with Astra on February 18.

AstraZeneca



Tom McKillop, chief executive designate of AstraZeneca, reported a 21 per cent rise in Zeneca's pharmaceutical sales in the US

Novartis prepared for a major deal

NOVARTIS, the Swiss healthcare group, yesterday expressed its willingness to make a big strategic deal as it reported 1998 sales that disappointed analysts' expectations (Paul Durman writes).

Raymond Bres, chief financial officer, said: "You will always have a stream of smaller transactions. Once in a while you have larger transactions. That is part of growing your business and defending your leading positions."

Novartis, formed from the merger three years ago of Ciba and Sandoz, has been suggested as a rival partner for Zeneca, which is planning a £48 billion merger with Astra of Sweden.

Novartis' sales grew by only 2 per cent to \$13.7 billion (£13.9 billion) although this represented a 5 per cent improvement in Swiss francs. Sales fell by 3 per cent in the final quarter.

Analysts had forecast annual sales increase of up to 5 per cent.

The group's shares fell 6 per cent in early trade.

Monsanto suffers charges of \$800m

MONSANTO, the controversial US agribusiness that is a leading producer of genetically engineered plants, has disclosed the price of its phenomenal year of expansion, reporting charges of more than \$300 million (£485 million) for restructuring and write-offs (Gari Morishita writes).

The company said that charges of \$625 million in the fourth quarter would cover the cost of 1,700 job losses and the disposal of assets. These are expected to save \$160 million a year for the company.

Monsanto is also taking a \$235 million hit for research and development write-offs relating to last year's multi-billion dollar acquisition spree, which included the takeover of Cargill's international seed business. The write-offs left Monsanto with a post-tax loss of \$603 million, compared with last year's \$3 million profit.

Monsanto scored a political victory in Britain yesterday when a House of Lords committee endorsed the use of genetically modified crops.

Nissan to go ahead with £215m Sunderland plan

By ADAM JONES

NISSAN, the debt-ridden Japanese car manufacturer, warned yesterday that 1998 profits from its UK manufacturing operation will be less than half the £77 million in 1997 because of the strength of sterling.

Amid speculation that Ford might bid for its ailing rival, Nissan — which has debts of about £12.5 billion — held talks with workers at its factory in Sunderland to reassure them that an investment programme is going ahead.

UK car exports top 1m

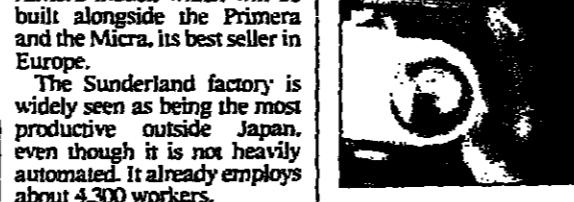
UK CAR output rose last year with exports exceeding a million for the first time. However, there was a big decline last month amid temporary factory closures and short-time working (Christine Buckley writes).

A total of 1.74 million cars were made in 1998, a rise of 3 per cent on 1997. Those built for export rose 6.1 per cent,

to 1.02 million, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Production of commercial vehicles fell 4.4 per cent to 227,379. The home market fell 7.3 per cent to 124,538.

December car production fell 11.6 per cent to 114,260,



Mirror rejects £900m RIM bid

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

THE board of The Mirror Group yesterday rejected as inadequate the £900 million bid from Regional Independent Media, publisher of the Yorkshire Post, but left the door open for further negotiations.

RIM has also agreed to assume £500 million debts, lifting the total value of its offer to £1.4 billion. RIM, which is run by Chris Oakley, former chief executive of Midland Independent Newspapers, now part of the Mirror, will be given further information on which to base a formal offer.

Yesterday the Mirror board received two new independent valuations of the group. Both, it is believed, place a higher value on the Mirror Group than the RIM offer, but the difference is not thought to be great enough to derail a possible deal.

RIM is backed by Cando-

ver, the venture capital group, and by the Soros Fund, the investment vehicle of George Soros, and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Mirror Group owns three national newspapers, which are the Daily Record in Scotland, the News Letter in Belfast and Midland Independent Newspapers.

Trinity, the largest regional newspaper group, which broke off talks with Mirror earlier this month, was planning a all-share offer.

A share deal is preferred by Phillips & Drew, the largest Mirror shareholder with more than 22 per cent. A number of other shareholders would probably be happy with RIM's cash if agreement can be reached on the valuation of the company.

Mirror shares fell 3p to 198.4p yesterday.

Daejan holds dividend

DAEJAN HOLDINGS, the property group, is maintaining the interim dividend at 10p after reporting pre-tax profits of £1.64 million for the six months to the end of September, against £1.29 million previously. Earnings were 54.2p a share, down from 55.6p. The company said the results reflect a change of policy in offering residential units for letting rather than for sale. Daejan shares, which hit a 12-month high of £17.10 in July, were unchanged at 10.90 yesterday.

Wiggins flies in US

WIGGINS GROUP, the property company that owns Kent International Airport, has agreed to acquire a 50-year lease on Smyrna Airport in Nashville, Tennessee, for an undisclosed sum. The airport handles 80,000 take-offs and landings each year, mainly corporate jets, jet maintenance and freight shipments. Wiggins also reported interim pre-tax profits of £634,000, down from £1.12 million previously when results benefited from property disposals. Earnings were 0.08p a share (0.16p). The dividend is again passed.

BT switches to Ericsson

BT has placed an order worth up to £270 million with Ericsson for high performance switches to expand its network capacity to meet the anticipated growth in Internet, high-speed data and video services. The switches will be deployed over the next four years, with the first one scheduled to go live in June. The investment is in addition to the £800 million expenditure BT announced last May to extend significantly its core optical fibre transmission network. BT spends about £2 billion a year on network improvements and overall expansion.

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JOHN CATT EDUCATIONAL LTD

Divine guidance for Laura Ashley?

FROM OLIVER ALGUST
IN NEW YORK

THE REV PAT ROBERTSON, the new Laura Ashley director appointed yesterday, is sure to add a splash of colour to the retailer's rather gloomy balance sheet. But shareholders and shoppers may well ask what he can do to improve finances — short of summoning divine help.

The company described Mr Robertson as "a noted media pioneer, educator, philanthropist, and religious broadcaster". This only hints at the unique role he plays in American culture and politics.

After his unsuccessful bid to be elected as the Republican Party's presidential candidate in 1988, he carved out a niche as a political commentator extraordinaire. From his weekly television pulpit on the 700 Club programme, he preaches Christian

fundamentalism and chastises President Clinton. For two decades, Mr Robertson has been one of the strongest voices of ultra-conservatism in America, a position he has expanded and fortified as chairman of the Christian Coalition, as much a business as it is a political lobby group.

Mr Robertson has wide-ranging business interests, controlled and sometimes headed by family members. The Robertsons own a refinery in California and companies in Africa and China, in addition to two million shares of a certain small English clothes retailer.

Until last year, Mr Robertson also controlled International Family Entertainment, a cable television company he founded. The business was sold to The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, for \$1.7 billion (£1 billion).

His personal wealth has allowed Mr

Robertson to remain a fixture in US politics far beyond the normal shelf-life of an unelected campaigner.

His particular talent is to seize a popular issue and become identified with the cause. He was one of the most fervent anti-abortion activists. This week he adopted the millennium bug for his purposes.

But his biggest fight recently has been over the sins of the President. Mr Robertson was one of the first mainstream commentators calling for impeachment to combat "moral degeneracy". Last year the Christian Broadcasting Network agreed to make a "substantial payment" to the Internal Revenue Service. The taxman had conducted an investigation into improper political activities during Mr Robertson's presidential bid.

All valuable business experience, no doubt.



Robertson: splash of colour

Bank	Bonds
Australia Secs	20.63
Belgium Fr	60.75
Canada	2.82
Denmark Kr	0.12
Denmark Kr	1.20
Egypt	5.83
Finland Mark	0.05
France Fr	5.63
Germany DM	2.62
Greece Dr	1.00
Hong Kong \$	13.53
Iceland	1.27
Ireland P	10.82
Ireland P	1.04
Ireland Sh	5.18
Ireland Sh	0.44
Italy Lira	2.97
Japan Yen	0.61
Malta Liri	3.35
New Zealand \$	5.19
Netherlands G	1.15
Netherlands G	268.80
Portugal Esc	27.87
Spain Peseta	10.62
Sweden Kr	2.05
Switzerland Fr	13.59
United States \$	2.44
United States \$	12.22
United States \$	1.81
USA \$	1.79

Rates for annual denominations. Increases only supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to other currencies. Rates as at close of 1000 GMT yesterday.

So Sears has gone. Can Liam Ashley be far behind? These two companies have far more in common than the desperate "Sale" signs currently splashed across their shop windows. Both are stories of inept management and ineffective shareholders. The current retail downturn may have added to their problems but in both cases it is the company and not the consumer that is culpable for shredding shareholder value.

Between them, they have provided lavish rewards to some of the most incompetent chief executives ever to have been given desk space. Just imagine how much faster either company might have been brought to its knees had it been able to employ both Liam Strong and Anne Ivenson simultaneously. What a wonderful double act that would have been! Mr Strong deploying riffs of expensive consultants to devise duff and expensive strategies and Ms Ivenson rolling them out into huge new unwanted stores, pausing only to don her leaflets and pose for *Vogue*.

The boards of both companies were bamboozled by their fast-talking chief executives, although Laura Ashley was at least quicker to spot the flaws in Ms Ivenson's tactics than Sears was in rumbling Liam Strong.

Sir Bob Reid supported Strong when his failings as a leader and manager were painfully clear to the outside world. But Sir Bob

tends to take a blinkered view of life. His non-executives appear to be completely blindfold, for they sat and watched as the business that Sir Charles Clore had built up was gradually shrunk to its current pitiful state. Lord Tebbit may have been a feisty politician but he sat on the Sears board for 12 years without, apparently, raising a voice of dissent.

Despite Sir Bob Reid's recent insistence that Sears shares were worth between £5 and £6, yesterday he recommended an offer of 25p as "a fair deal for shareholders". It certainly represents the fairest treatment they have had for some time. Given Philip Green's reputation as one of the sharpest operators, it is worth noting that, not so long ago, the shares languished below 15p. If he is now prepared to pay so much more, he clearly has every confidence that he can extract the sort of valuation that Sir Bob talked about.

Watching Mr Green and his backers make his profits will inevitably be galling for Sears shareholders but those who had held the stock for years have only themselves to blame. Even after the fiasco of the Paca deal, they allowed Sir Bob to remain at the helm of the incredibly shrinking Sears ship.

If Sir Bernard Ashley had been removed from the scene sooner, Laura Ashley might not have been such a miserable tale. But he at least had the excuse of a huge shareholding to justify his interfering. His views on what has happened since are probably unprintable. Ditto the Malaysian investors who were persuaded to bail it out last time.

Heavy weather for insurance bidders

Guardian Royal Exchange's future should have been settled by now, eight weeks after the smallest of the independent composite insurers acknowledged that it was in play. But the haggling still goes on.

Three years ago, when Royal

and Sun Alliance were pondering their merger, much of the industry was enjoying a healthy recovery in profit. Even a year ago, when Commercial Union and General Accident popped the question to each other, things were not too bad.

Margins on general insurance have now relapsed, along with most of the share prices, making it much harder to offer investors an attractive package. While other sectors boom, insurers never bounced back from the late summer post-Russia mini-crash.

Even GRE, buoyed largely by bid hopes, trades a quarter below its 1998 high of 475p a share. Sun Life and Provincial, backed by its ambitious French parent AXA, has seen its share price keep up but the early favourite seems disinclined to play a premium price for GRE and has been ruled out, along with other try-on bidders. That has left the field for Royal & SunAlliance, which ought to be prepared to pay more.

With a market value only half

that of Allied Zurich, for example, RSA desperately needs to bulk itself up to have any chance of surviving as one of the big global insurance players. And there is a lot of overlap to maximise cost cutting. But RSA cannot afford a hostile bid for GRE.

After the high hopes of 1996, RSA rapidly lost friends by failing to sort out in advance the management of the merged group, resulting in the chiefs of both previous companies being stripped of power a year ago.

Bernard Mendelson, who was brought over from the US operation to speed up the £17 million a year of planned costs cuts, has yet to see the fruits of his labours. At this tricky point, a strikingly timed circular from HSBC has bolstered lingering resistance in the GRE camp. HSBC urges institutional shareholders not to allow themselves to be shortchanged by a cheap bid or carpe-diem. It is aiming for 430p a share, valuing GRE at £3.8 billion, rather

than the £3 billion some rejected suitors had in mind.

At that price, a bidder would have to add value to GRE's jewels, such as the PPP sickness insurer, rather than just wield the axe. Anyone who tries will have to do a lot of convincing lobbying in hostile City parlours.

The insurance market's saviour

Ron Sandler deserves a decent send-off when he departs from Lloyd's this summer. He may only have served four years but they were crucial years for the survival of the insurance market. Mr Sandler and Sir David Rowland rarely acknowledged just how close to extinction Lloyd's was, but they laboured mightily to achieve the settlements with the names and the new investment that would enable the market to survive.

South African Sandler might not have attracted the same headlines as his predecessor, the eccentric Peter Middleton, but he did get the job done. Mr Middleton, famous as the motor-bike riding former monk, made a hasty escape in Salomon Brothers but

did not appear to settle there any more than he did at Lloyd's.

Mr Sandler's experience in sorting out Lloyd's might have made him the perfect catch for Barclays, still in search of a chief executive. He has probably been asked. But it seems that like his predecessor, he is attracted to the world of investment banking and is unlikely to have any trouble in landing the sort of globe-trotting role that will bring him a decent salary.

It will be intriguing to see whether he will want to venture some of his money on becoming a Lloyd's name. Sandler had little sympathy for those names who enjoyed the profits while they flowed but refused to pay up when fortune turned nasty. Lloyd's is now chasing them and, like Sandler, means business.

On-Line honesty

THE directors of On-Line clearly enjoy a joke. The chuckling was almost audible yesterday as they owned up to the fact that they are not really a wizzy Internet-oriented business after all. Having sold some of their hugely overvalued shares, they could afford a spot of honesty. But the spirit of openness is unlikely to be contagious. Investors need to tread warily as they try and pick Internet winners. Arcadia's £1 million of Internet sales amount to a promising start but not a whole new personality.

Mobil's spending cut by \$600m

BY DOMINIC WALSH

Weak oil prices have forced Mobil to cut current-year spending plans by \$600 million (£364 million), and the company has given warning that oil production will fall in 1999.

The US oil company, which has agreed an \$80 billion merger with the rival Exxon, has pruned its project portfolio and given warning that its 1999 budget may be cut further if oil prices fail to improve.

Mobil said its 1999 capital budget would be \$4.8 billion down 11 per cent from last year. Drilling will continue in the new West of Shetlands area.

Mobil's warning coincided with better than expected earnings from Exxon. It suffered a 40 per cent fall in fourth-quarter net profits to \$1.5 billion, but earnings on a comparable basis were only 30 per cent down, less than the 50 per cent full analysis forecast.

VAT ruling
Car leasing and trading companies had a setback in the European Court yesterday when the Advocate General backed UK Customs and Excise's right to limit recovery of VAT on cars. Up to £15 billion would be at stake including backdated claims by the companies. The court's final judgment, which usually follows the Advocate General's opinion, will be made later this year.

Cisco invests

Cisco Systems, the US technology firm, is making a £10 million investment in Scotland by unveiling a European research and development centre in Edinburgh, and starting its first European manufacturing in Livingston. The investment could create up to 160 jobs. The research centre is developing software technology for world markets.

Krug for LVMH

LVMH, the French luxury goods group, has bought the Krug champagne business from the Rémy Cointreau drinks company for FFr 1 billion (£107 million). LVMH products include Dom Pérignon champagne and Louis Vuitton leather goods.

Bank's £19m buy
Brown Shipley, the merchant bank, is to buy Henry Cooke, the Ofex-traded investment manager, for £19.6 million. More than half of Cooke's shareholders have already accepted the deal.

Bitter end near as Marston's rejects new Wolves' offer

BY DOMINIC WALSH

MARSTON Thompson & Evershed yesterday rejected an increased offer from Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, setting the scene for what is expected to be a tight finale to this increasingly bitter battle.

Wolves raised its offer from 28p a share to 30.6p — valuing its prey at around £290 million — and raised the amount of cash it is offering to 230p compared to 182p under its original offer in November. The balance will be paid in shares.

However, Nick Letcher, Marston's chief executive, said the bid was "predicated on a flawed strategy that has consistently destroyed value and should be rejected". He pointed out that Wolves' revised estimate of cost savings — up from £12 million to £17 million — was still well short of the £24 million of synergy benefits promised by Marston's in its own £30 million counterbid for Wolves.

Most analysts expect the new offer from Wolves to be accepted, although some expressed disappointment at the level of the increase. One said: "I was hoping for around 31.5p a share, so this is far from a knockout bid. It looks as though it's going to be close, although my view is that Wolves should get it — just."

David Thompson, managing director of Wolves, said the revised offer was fair in that it represented a premium of 77 per cent over the Marston's share price prior to market speculation of a deal, and 54

per cent higher than the day before it finally launched its bid two months ago.

Mr Thompson dismissed Marston's so-called Pac-Man counterbid as "expensive" and "high-risk", adding: "It purports to address industry consolidation, but is in fact disintegrating,"

downsizing and dilution." He also cast doubt on its ability to deliver £24 million of cost savings without damaging the future prospects of the business.

He also launched a fierce attack on Mr Letcher for failing to follow a consistent strategy. He claimed that while the

Marston's counterbid envisaged the retention of its Burton brewery, where it makes Pedigree bitter, this was "quite at odds with their recent offer to sell it to us". He said he had been offered the brewery twice over the past 12 months.

Marston's shareholders

have until February 4 to decide whether to accept the raised offer. However, analysts expect Mr Letcher to respond by raising his own counterbid or, at the very least, to increase the cash element of the offer.

Tempsus, page 28

Hamleys adds to retailer gloom with drop in sales

BY SAEED SHAH

DIFFICULT trading conditions in an increasingly competitive market made for a disappointing Christmas and new year period for Hamleys, Blacks Leisure and William Baird.

The toy retailer yesterday reported group sales 2.4 per cent down for the 24 weeks to January 16, sending the shares 11 per cent lower to 1324p.

Hamleys said, however, that the decline in sales growth has been partially offset by the continued strengthening of margins. It said the flagship Regent Street store and Satellite operations showed "real strength" and sales were up 3.7 per cent on last year.

In the two weeks before Christmas, sales at the Regent Street store increased 12 per cent over the previous year.

The House of Toys concessions did not perform well, with sales down 14 per cent in the 24-week period.

William Baird, the clothing group, said sales for 1998 are expected to be 4 per cent lower than 1997, after flat sales in the first half. Profits for 1998 are expected to be slightly ahead at Baird's Brand business but behind Marks & Spencer.

The company said pre-tax profits for the year to December 31, 1998, are expected to be no less than £30 million. Last time, Baird made pre-tax profit of £31.1 million on turnover of £550.9 million.

Blacks Leisure Group, the

Shortage of phones alarming for JWE

BY CHRIS AYRES

A SHORTAGE of pre-pay mobile phones over Christmas caused JWE Telecom, the Yorkshire mobile phone retailer and distributor, to issue a profit warning yesterday.

The shares fell 23 per cent to 163.5p after it said it had sold just 16,000 handsets during December, 4,000 short of its target.

John Weatherill, JWE's chairman, said: "Reduced margins on pre-pay phones and the inability of supply to meet demand will result in profits growth being below that we had hoped to achieve."

"However, trading has been very strong and we are well positioned to take advantage of the growth predicted in the sector in the current year and beyond."

JWE has 50 retail outlets following its acquisition of Midland Phones.

For the six months to October 2, pre-tax profits grew by 5 per cent to £44,000, while sales rose 36 per cent to £12 million.

Earnings per share were 153p, down nearly 7 per cent from 164p. There is an interim dividend of 0.65p, the first since the company's float early last year.

Arcadia rebounds on news of 300 job cuts

L&G among the top ten fund managers

BY RICHARD MILES AND CAROLINE MERRELL

LEGAL & GENERAL has galloped into the top ten institutional fund managers by attracting more than £1 billion of new business to its index tracking funds in 1998.

The composite insurer said yesterday that funds under management had grown to £7 billion (£57 billion) as trusts switched to "more consistent and cheaper products".

Mandates of £250 million of more accounted for a third of the new business, largely at the expense of Garmore or Phillips & Drew. The growth helped Legal & General's total group assets to swell to £79 billion from £62 billion.

Worldwide sales of life and pension policies rose 21 per cent to £494 million. UK sales increased 16 per cent to £341 million.

Single-premium business showed the most improvement, up 23 per cent in UK life and pensions to £1.4 billion, continuing a decade-long trend away from regular premium payments.

Legal & General's Pep payments jumped 31 per cent to £755 million.

But David Prosser, group chief executive, sounded a note of caution: "We wouldn't be immune from any fall in consumer confidence. But the fourth quarter held up pretty well. We have not seen any significant falling away in business."

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like in the four weeks before Christmas. Last year ELC posted a £6.7 million loss.

However, Menzies, which sold its newsagent business to WH Smith last year, still plans to sell ELC in the near future to focus on its core business, distribution, and to continue the move into airport support services.

Menzies' pre-tax profits for the six months to October 31 rose to £12.2 million (£200,000) on a turnover of £602.7 million (£522.4 million).

Earnings per share were 2.35p (loss of 1.2p) and the interim dividend remains at 4.25p a share.

The results were hit by a poor perfor-

mance from THE Home Entertainment, the music, video and book distributor. The group has set aside an exceptional charge of £15 million in the second half to reorganise the subsidiary.

David Mackay, John Menzies chief executive, called the situation at THE "unacceptable". He said: "We got it badly wrong in the last year and the buck stops with me." He said group second-half profits were likely to be "much closer to last year's performance than they were in the first half".

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target

Costly drugs and mobile phones offer no cure for faltering market

Paul Durman
says price still
matters for
'future stocks'
behind the
asset bubble

Here is a favourite fact from Phillips & Drew, the bearish fund manager. If every man, woman and child in the UK had a mobile phone, and all of them made 250 calls a year, the industry's total revenue would still be only a third of the stock market value of the UK's mobile phone companies.

This back-of-the-envelope calculation was done before Vodafone's £40 billion takeover offer for AirTouch of the US drove the telecom sector's share prices to even more extreme levels.

Vodafone's share price is two and a half times what it was at the start of last year, and, at £35 billion, the company is now worth more than ten times this year's sales and about 50 times its forecast profits.

Orange, yet to make a profit, has quadrupled in value and is now worth £11 billion. BT is still dominated by traditional telephony but even it has seen its share price double.

Most extraordinary of all is the rise and rise of COLT Telecom. COLT's sales last year will have barely reached £350 million but it is already in the top half of the FTSE100 and is valued at £7.9 billion — more than big, long-established companies such as Bass, Safeway and Alliance & Leicester.

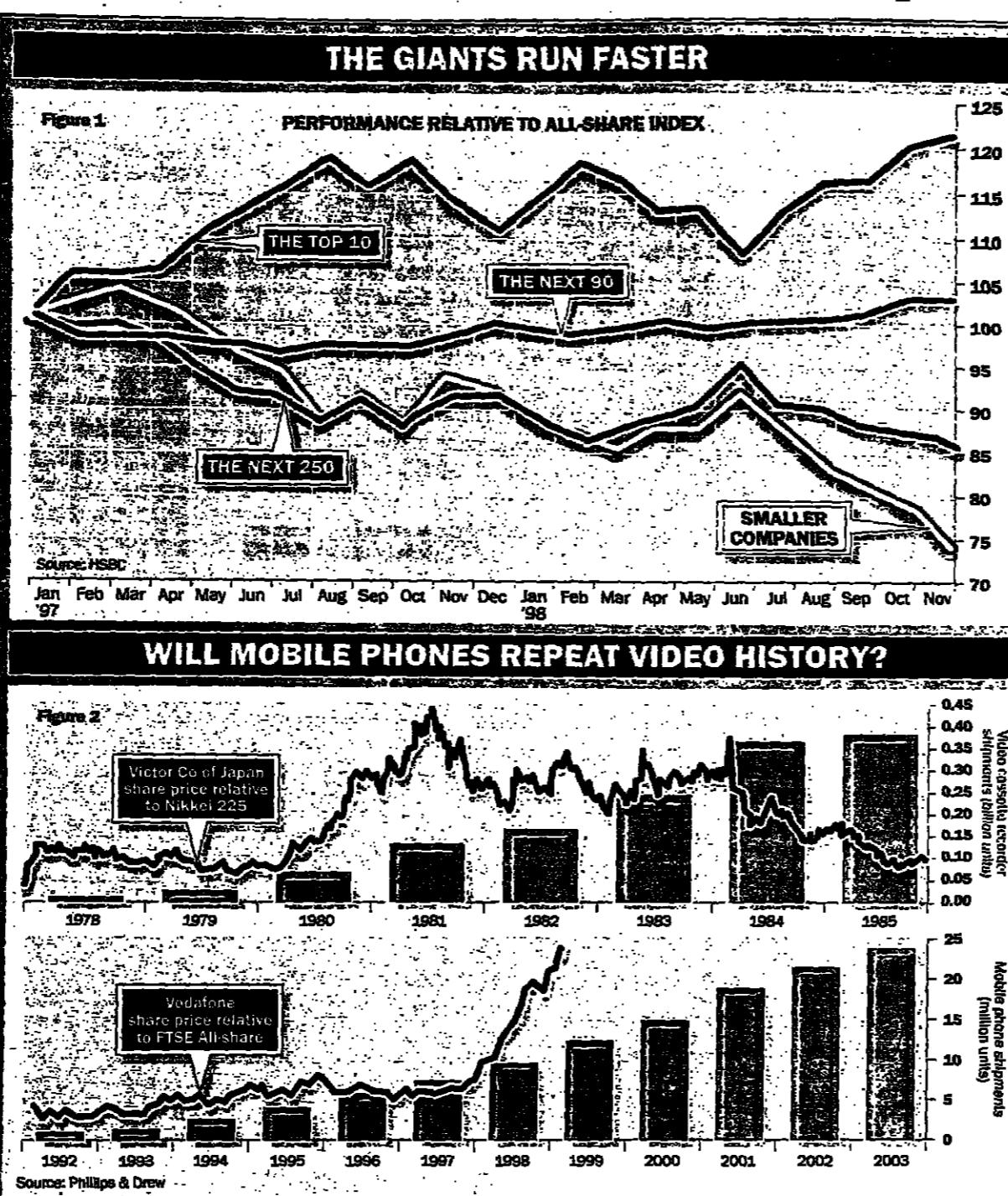
COLT has prompted many investors and commentators to wonder whether the market has taken leave of its senses, but still the onward rush continues. Investor enthusiasm does extend beyond the telecoms sector but only as far as pharmaceuticals and (less importantly) Internet-related stocks — which bizarrely, has turned out to mean previously unloved retailers such as Dixons and WH Smith.

The investment logic is that in a low-inflation world struggling with recession in Asian and other emerging economies, investors are desperate to find "growth stocks", whose businesses will prosper in a downturn. And telecoms, healthcare and the Internet form a Holy Trinity of industries with unquestionable growth potential.

Even though telecom groups are battling with rapid technological change, pharmaceutical companies are facing patent expiries and fierce pricing pressures, and Internet firms have yet to figure out how to make a profit, it seems no price is too high for these hallowed stocks. Price/earnings ratios (when there are earnings on which to calculate them) have soared far above historical norms.

Rob Waugh, assistant director at Phillips & Drew, said: "We are watching this market with disbelief."

P&D's clients have suffered because of the firm's cautious stance on the market in recent years. With big stakes in BT, Coats Viyella and Sears, it is accused of buying the history of the stock market rather than its future. Nonetheless, the P&D



analysis — shared in part by many leading active managers — continues to pose difficult questions for telecoms fans.

The exceptional performance of a handful of very big companies is distorting what is going on in the UK stock market. Since the Russian economic crisis split over into Western financial markets last August, the FTSE 100 has climbed back to almost record levels.

However, Phillips & Drew argues, this is almost entirely due to the unjustified rise in the price of the largest companies. Much of the FTSE 100 is actually trading sideways or even in a bear market.

This can be seen from figure 1. It shows that the FTSE 100's outperformance of the wider stock market during 1997 and 1998 was almost entirely due to the ten largest companies. The

rest of the index barely kept pace. The escalating value of the big ten is scarcely explained by their profits performance. Table 2 suggests the largest companies will, on average, report a 6 per cent decline in profits for their latest financial year, largely because of the collapsing oil prices and Glaxo Wellcome's loss of Zantac sales.

Glaxo's profits are predicted to bounce back strongly this year because of a series of new drugs. But does this justify the 150 per cent rise in the share price since the start of 1997?

Its p/e ratio, relative to the FTSE All-share index — a measure of its expensiveness compared with the rest of the stock market — doubled to about 1.5 between 1994 and the start of 1998. But since then it has soared even further, recently peaking at 2.75. The stampede of the

giant companies is being driven by sheer weight of money. In part this comes from the US: investment managers awash with mutual fund cash are turning to Europe. Many are restricting their buying to the largest 200 or so companies.

More important is the growing influence of indexation. More and more investors are buying shares in the biggest companies simply because they are the biggest companies. This can be self-perpetuating: as Vodafone and COLT rise through the ranks of the FTSE 100, they attract an ever greater weight of funds.

This phenomenon extends well beyond true index funds. Actively managed pension funds, tired of underperform-

ing, have moved closer and closer to an index weighting.

An analysis by Schroder Securities showed pension funds were significantly underweight in the big four sectors of oil, drugs, telecoms and banks at the end of 1996. But since then, closet indexing has prompted pension funds to increase their weighting in these sectors from 87 to 96 per cent.

Meanwhile, markets continue to display behaviour which, if not irrational, is certainly highly peculiar. The startling rises of any company that can claim a link with the Internet is the most obvious example.

Daily market movements of more than 100 points have become routine as price volatility has risen sharply. For the bears, these are danger signals.

Even those who sympathise with this analysis find it hard to imagine what will bring the bull run to an end — particularly because of the weight of money pouring into the markets from US retail savings.

The markets have struggled off the October 1997 scare, Rus-

sia, Long Term Capital Management and now Brazil.

Phillips & Drew argues that the support from the "weight of money" is illusory. It really indicates a preference for people to hold liquid assets. The US savings ratio has dropped so low it has turned negative — surely an unsustainable position.

Most investors find it hard to conceive that the market might fall by more than 10 or perhaps 20 per cent. After all, the economic outlook in many Western economies remains relatively sanguine.

However, with the largest companies trading at such crazy prices, the risk is that when the bubble bursts the ensuing crash will be similarly extravagant. The US economy looks almost invulnerable — just like Japan ten years ago.

tions for 1998, according to the appropriately but unimaginatively named magazine *Fusions & Acquisitions*.

The rise of the house of Rothschild has caused much consternation in Paris, as it signals once and for all the decline of Lazard Frères, the merchant bank that was once so powerful that it virtually ran France. In 1997 Lazard was eclipsed by Goldman Sachs. Unibp, suggested local experts. But in the following year Lazard was pushed back into third with Goldman second.

All this is seen as more power to the elbow of David de Rothschild, heir apparent to Sir Evelyn as leader of the family bank and founder of Rothschild et Cie. But also watch out for the Paris dealmaker, Edward de Rothschild — David's half brother.

As the group have decided to

shut the entire video in a mental hospital with the lead singer being wheeled around acting like a madman. The main reference to buses comes in a grandiosely rude line about a stewardess. Never mind — there's always the hope of a remake of *On the Buses*.

company such as Glaxo Wellcome. Yes, the shares may fall in the short term, but in the long run shares will always outperform other investments, won't they? Price becomes almost an irrelevance.

Table 1 shows how badly flawed this thinking has proved in the past. It shows the performance over seven years of ten well-known members of the Nifty 50 — the great US corporations that turned in barnstorming performances in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Companies such as McDonalds, Disney and IBM continued to produce respectable profits growth. Yet the share prices of these and all the other examples declined as the stock market underwent a massive de-rating. The p/e ratios of the Nifty 50 fell by almost 80 per cent.

Mobile phones and the Internet are existing opportunities, but stock markets have seen many new technologies in the past — and have frequently overvalued them. Figure 2 shows the tremendous growth in JVC's share price that attended the arrival of the video cassette recorder. But while VCR sales continued to grow, JVC's share price went into reverse as competition drove down returns. Can Vodafone really retain its huge margins, or is it facing the same fate?

From Mr L. RAMPERSAARD Sir, The article published on January 13, 1999, titled "US facing trade war with Japan and Europe" illustrates America's "true" commitment to free trade. It reinforces the view that the GATT and indeed its son the WTO, was only set up for the gains of its designers.

The real task for the future of trade talks is how it should deal with the emergence of regionalism. If we are to avoid regional trade wars dominated by the US, Japan and Europe, the leading governments in our world economy should not stray from the liberal principles of the trade talks.

The weakening of the multilateral approach has been gradual and by neglect, through the accumulation of ad hoc decisions to protect specific sectors. These departures from the original design of free trade agreements have created a period of instability and uncertainty in international trade relations. It is essential for the US to set an example as indeed your City Editor points out on January 13: "the open trading system depends on that American commitment".

Yours faithfully,
Luke Rampersaard,
79 Cliffea Grove,
Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex SS9 1NG.

Benefits of working time directive

From Mr Ian McCartney, Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry

Sir, The Working Time Directive (Commentary, January 8 and 9) gives the basic rights to workers that most people take for granted, but which have been denied to far too many for far too long.

Many agency workers work part time in order to balance work and family life. They need regular rest breaks and paid leave just as much as anyone else. That is why the Government has included them in the scope of the Working Time Directive.

Agencies already keep a note of their workers' hours.

The only extra requirement is to ensure that staff do not work more than 48 hours a week on average without them agreeing in advance to do so. And providing paid leave on a pro rata basis in no way should need a doubling of charges. The best companies provide paid leave, rest breaks and a sensible working week because they recognise that people need time away from the workplace.

Workers in other European countries benefit from the Working Time Directive. Its introduction into the UK was long overdue.

IAN McCARTNEY, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET.

Panel must recognise impartiality

From Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale

Sir, I would like to rectify one point in your Commentary of January 7. I am not questioning the essence of the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers. I do question its present operational practice in terms of enforcement of its own Spirit, Principles and Rules, and its executive structure which ignores the "Rule against Bias".

I do believe that he or she must be seen to be impartial. It is relevant that the Panel it-

self recognises the need for impartiality in Section (e) of the introduction to the Code. It could also recognise this at the executive level as there are three deputy directors general who would have to act if the director general were indisposed. They could therefore surely act if there is a potential conflict of interest.

Yours faithfully,
WOLFSON,
The Great Universal Stores,
Leicester House,
Curzon Street W1Y 7FL.

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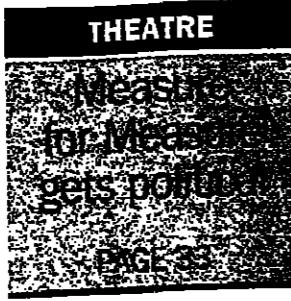
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		SAVINGS	ON COVER PRICE	SAVINGS	ON COVER PRICE		
Belgium	BEFR	2000	40%	1250	47%	4000	46%
France	FRF	2000	4%	1250	4%	4000	4%
Italy	ITL	104887	30%	67000	20.9%	104887	20.9%
Luxembourg	LUF	11558	45%	7100	45%	11558	45%
Netherlands	NLG	1075	10%	6500	10%	1075	10%
Spain	PTP	2000	10%	1250	10%	2000	10%
Sweden	SEK	9232	37%	5800	37%	9232	37%
United Kingdom	PSI	2000	40%	1250	40%	2000	40%
United States of America	USD	104	37%	65	37%	104	37%
USA (ARMED FORCES)	USD	723	37%	405	37%	723	37%

Some day news delivery is available as follows: Belgium — Paris (code: France — Paris (code: 75); Italy — Milan (code: Roma); Spain — Madrid (code: Madrid); Sweden — Stockholm (code: Stockholm); United Kingdom — London (code: London); USA (Armed Forces) — New York (code: NY); USA (Armed Forces) — San Francisco (code: SF); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed Forces) — Denver (code: DN); USA (Armed Forces) — Salt Lake City (code: SL); USA (Armed Forces) — Tucson (code: TUC); USA (Armed Forces) — Phoenix (code: PHO); USA (Armed Forces) — San Antonio (code: SA); USA (Armed Forces) — Dallas (code: DA); USA (Armed Forces) — Houston (code: HO); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Anchorage (code: AK); USA (Armed Forces) — Honolulu (code: HI); USA (Armed Forces) — Seattle (code: SE); USA (Armed Forces) — Portland (code: PD); USA (Armed

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE



THEATRE

TOOTSIE
Dustin Hoffman
gets down to it

ARTS

POP



Hollywood is never short of people tossing bizarre wigs at each other. You have heard of vanity publishing? Well, this is vanity suing. But even hardened observers of Tinseltown trauma are awestruck by the latest wacky courtroom tiff. A Los Angeles judge is at present pondering whether Dustin Hoffman, a movie star of the most dogged Method-Acting persuasion, should be awarded \$5 million in damages because *Los Angeles* magazine depicted him in a woman's dress without seeking his permission.

Students of motion-picture history will realise that there are complex cultural references involved here. In his 1982 hit *Tootsie*, Hoffman did indeed dress up as a woman — and very ravishing he looked, too. So why is the magazine being sued? Apparently because it showed Hoffman in the *wrong sort of dress*. Using computer technology it doctored the *Tootsie* poster, removing a rather M&S-style red gown from Hoffman's little body and replacing it with a fetching off-the-shoulder number. The altered

picture was then put on the fashion pages with the caption "Dustin Hoffman isn't a drag in a butter-colored silk gown by Richard Tyler and Ralph Lauren heels."

Had such an unauthorised vision of loveliness appeared in an advertisement, Hoffman's case for compensation would be much stronger: his image would clearly have been exploited for commercial gain. But Hoffman cannily claims that magazine's fashion-spread is virtually an advertisement for the clothes portrayed.

Nonsense, the magazine retorts. Fashion pages are editorial, and therefore protected by the First Amendment. I leave historians to ponder whether Benjamin Franklin and company intended the noble prose of the American Constitution to be applied to the case of a cross-dressing actor depicted in a frock that is not his own. It's not impossible, I suppose.

But computers have made photographic manipulation much more so-

phisticated. For instance, I could approach some mischievous operation in *The Times* graphics department with two perfectly sober photographs of, say, Miss Melinda Messenger and the Archbishop of Canterbury — and within minutes we could fiddle the originals so that these two pillars of British society

appeared to be caught in the most thrilling conjunction.

Nor is this dangerous technological alchemy confined to still images. So many television advertisements now tamper with old films in the cause of flogging new cars (think of Dennis Hopper appearing to motor past his younger self in *Easy Rider*) that the trick has become a cliché. Now there is talk of creating "new" Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo movies. The computer will digitally store the screen legend's characteristic body movements and vocal traits, then feed them as required into new scenes and dialogue.

A macabre idea? Perhaps, but I bet the interest will be enormous. After all, tomorrow a vast crowd will gather at Wembley Arena for *Elvis Presley — The Concert*, in which the voice and screen image of the pelvically mobile one will be meshed electronically with live

backing from his former associates. This marks the first time that an entertainer who is no longer living has headlined a concert," the promoters say. Oh really? Have they never seen the Royal Variety Performance?

You don't have to be Mystic Morrison to foresee image manipulation becoming one of the big legal battlegrounds. More and more celebrities will be going to court, à la Dustin, to protect their "right of publicity".

"I learned friends will have a ball. And what about the rights of the dead? Who is to say that Garbo would have approved of her computerised image eerily presiding over some sultry new drama? Surely at this late stage in her career she really might want to be alone.

The easy answer is "her heirs and estate will protect her". But one's dearly beloved relatives are

not necessarily the most scrupulous guardians of one's posthumous reputation, especially if they can smell money in the air. Has Jacqueline du Pré been well served by her sister? I merely ask.

The fact is that computerised image manipulation, like genetic engineering, has leapt out at us before we have had time to devise a relevant code of ethics. But the genie can't be stuffed back into the bottle now. People in public life probably have to accept that if they want to breathe the heady oxygen of publicity they must renounce control of their image for ever. There's no point in suddenly shouting at the media, in the immortal words of the Princess Royal, "Why don't you just haff off?" They won't.

So all in all, I think Dustin has been a bit daft. Mind you, if *Los Angeles* magazine ever depicts me in a Richard Tyler silk gown I shall certainly sue. For one thing, the Editor has exclusive serialisation rights to the bodies of all *Times* journalists. For another, I never wear anything except Armani. And a string vest in winter, of course.

DEE CONWAY

Guns and girls were all Greek to us

OPERA

As someone sings in *The Mikado*, "and I am right, and you are right, and everything is quite correct," which just about sums up Paul Barker's new children's opera, given just two performances on Wednesday and Thursday by Lontano and the New London Children's Chorus. The general message is that war is simply frightful and killing people awfully wrong, something that those who go to opera in Western Europe have more or less hoisted in, but maybe Lontano is planning an extensive tour of the Balkans, followed by a run at the Pentagon.

The piece is also written for girls only, 26 of them, but after that the correctness starts to

wear a bit thin. *Stone Angels* lasts for about 40 minutes, and there is a long synopsis in the programme, a wise precaution since without it even the most warm-hearted audience would be hard put to know what on earth was going on.

Roughly speaking, survivors of an air crash on an island off Greece encounter two groups of girls: Stoners (proper little Ladies of the Flies, nasty) and Glocks (peaceable, nice). War is raging overhead. Barker is an experienced opera composer and cannot be accused of writing down to his performers: tricky intervals

and rhythms, vocal lines hard to pitch. Fine, but the children — all of whom deserve highest praise — had to concentrate so hard on their music that words took second place and were often inaudible, and passages in Greek were no help. There was a great deal of speech and melodrama, and neat differentiation of musical language for the two groups. Odaline de la Martinez conducted the five-strong Lontano chamber group efficiently.

The main point of interest in the evening was how it all came to pass. The absence of anyone to pull it into some sort of coherent dramatic shape proved fatal.

RODNEY MILNES



St Trinian's revisited: members of the excellent New London Children's Choir struggle through the chaotic *Stone Angels*

Magic circle

CONCERTS

Goehrfest is the pithy, if less than elegant, title of an enterprising series of concerts taking place in Cambridge over the next couple of months. The occasion is the retirement of Alexander Goehr, who has been Professor of Music at Cambridge University since 1976, but the opportunity has been taken to celebrate and promote the work of the many composers who have come within Goehr's orbit over the past quarter-century. Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood, along with Goehr himself, have been at the centre of this circle, but younger generations too (George Benjamin, Julian Anderson, Thomas Adès and many others) have come to prominence and all are represented in Goehrfest.

For the opening concert on Wednesday night in the West Road Concert Hall, the University Quartet in Residence, the Endellion String Quartet, gave a neatly balanced programme of Haydn, Schumann and Goehr (the latter's String Quartet No 3, dating

from 1975-76). If the first movement of the Goehr was modelled to some extent, by the composer's own admission, on Beethoven (specifically the E Minor Piano Sonata Op 90), then the second movement recalls Haydn in its quizzically conversational phrase endings. The third movement is altogether more opaque, however, more densely argued, and the Endellion showed an adroit course through these difficult waters.

In Haydn's Quartet in D Major Op 71 No 2 the ensemble's close rapport enabled it to explore a range of moods over the course of the four movements. Well-sprung rhythms gave a buoyant feel to the faster passages, while the Adagio cantabile was as songful as its title implies.

Schumann's debt to Beethoven in his A Minor Quartet Op 41 No 1, is rather more explicit than Goehr's. In the Adagio, the long-breathed main theme inevitably recalls the slow movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Endellion succeeded in sustaining these arching lines throughout the movement and offered a smoothly contoured, rather than sharply defined discourse in the first movement. Despite Schumann's dedication of the quartet to Mendelssohn, they perhaps rightly treated the Scherzo not as one of that composer's elfin creations but as a sturdier, more passionate utterance.

For the opening concert on

Going solo

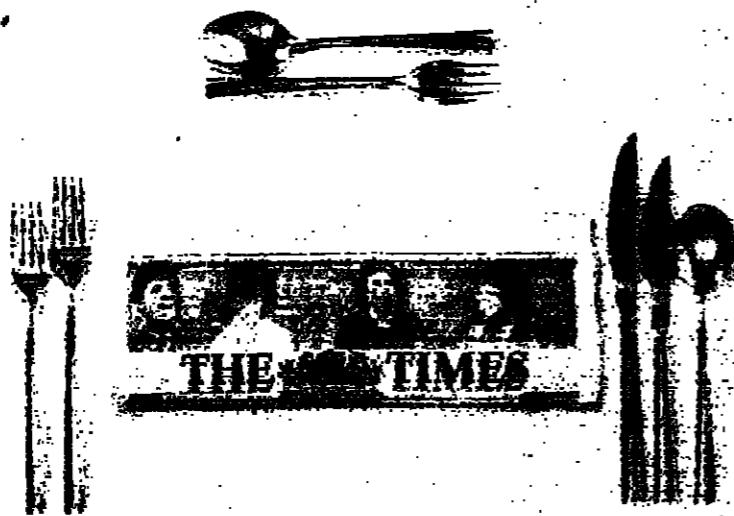
an overbright sound relaxed into something less edgy.

After the Bach, it made good musical sense, if not good box office, to go on to another, more routine work of a quite different kind. The beginning of *Les Éléments*, which opens with a prelude called *Chaos* and with dissonant harmonies based on a chord of the 13th, is quite astonishing. The pre-Strauss use of two piccolos to represent birdsong and the pre-Wagner fire music are less sensational but no less interesting. It was difficult, on the other hand, to believe in the legitimacy of the cackling-like yelps from members of the orchestra in the *Tambourin*. Until a smart musicologist demonstrates the authenticity of these interventions scepticism is not out of order.

As the most Baroque-minded of the great composers of the 19th century, Brahms was well placed in the second half of the concert. It was reassuring to hear the Second Symphony so well done in the traditionally mellow, lyrical manner with nothing too urgent or querulous about it, with a splendidly sonorous orchestral presence, sensitively shaped instrumental solos and a powerfully cumulative structural purpose. If the brass-laden ending seemed more manic than triumphant, more in the manner of Tchaikovsky than Brahms, that was the one miscalculation in an otherwise idiomatically and perceptively characterised interpretation.

GERALD LARNER

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CHANGING TIMES

Still under a cloud

Robert Holman's play *Bad Weather* has not improved on the journey from Stratford to the Barbican. Set on a rough Middlesbrough housing estate, all broken windows, families and lives, it purports to question whether environment, upbringing or innate character traits had behaviour. Every so often, a thoughtful and subtle idea raises its head, only to sink under the weight of an under-articulated script.

Teenage troublemaker Jamie is on trial for a crime committed by his friend Luke, whose 17-year-old sister Rhona is carrying Jamie's child. Rhona tries to convince Luke to confess; Jamie's mother Kay is not so sure since she turns out to care more for Luke than her son. Noel, a juror who believes in Jamie's innocence, pitches

in by starting an adulterous affair with Kay, and he and Rhona summon Kay's old French nanny to sort things out.

French nannies? Council estates? Implausibly, Kay is the heir to a vicarial fortune frittered away by a spendthrift mother. This allows everyone (except poor Jamie, who has been put away for four years) to up sticks and go picnicking in the Loire, where the sadistically severe nanny succumbs to the adolescent attractions of Luke, and like Kay refuses to trade him in for Jamie's freedom. Silly enough anyway, but unfortunately, Paul Poplewell's callow, charmless Luke makes a wholly unconvincing sex-god, which torpedoes any last shred of credibility.

To often the dialogue is artificial, and though a constant if studied, intensity holds the attention, Steven Finnott's static direction fails to liven things up. But there are incidental pleasures. The promising Emma Handy yakks away engagingly as spiky matronly Rhona, and Ryan Pope's forceful Jamie manages to balance whining self-pity with residual pride. Susan Brown as Kay is frequently touching, though she does not do much with her uncharismatic part. The unobtrusive set, all grain-daubed metal, shunters and concrete slabs—a bit like the Barbican—gives good service.

"It's all degrees, a bit of knowledge here, a bit of understanding there. It's all a mess," says Luke towards the end. To be charitable, maybe Holman intended to suggest that understanding motivations, ascribing guilt, is an impossible task. If so, it does not make for gripping drama. A brave play, but ultimately unrewarding.

NIGEL CLIFF



Caught in the Bard's Viennese whirl: Robert Glenister plays the Duke as a man propelled into a nervous breakdown, while Clare Holman is an Isabella pushed on to the sidelines

Beauty and a universal beast

Most actors playing the Duke begin *Measure for Measure* in fine princely style. They calmly hand over the running of Vienna to the puritanical Angelo and suddenly leave for their sabbatical. Not in Michael Boyd's production. Robert Glenister stamps grey-faced in a chair with a gin bottle while extracts from Revelation play on the wooden wall behind him, and then, hearing his sides beating down the door, totters down a walkway into the stalls. Angelo, Escalus et al are left to hear his instructions relayed to them via the sort of creaky gramophone you might have found in Schreiber's Vienna, circa 1900.

This emboldens the play, a more overtly sexual than moral, and though I blushed at the moment

gentleman of all temperance, yet I cannot regret it. One reason why *Measure for Measure* is classified as a problem play is that the Duke's motives in disguising himself as a friar and spying on Angelo are hard to explain in any normal way: so hard that scholars have been impelled to see him as symbolising God; Christ, James, I, Heaven knows whom.

Glenister's Duke has, you feel, been propelled into a nervous breakdown by the confusions and contradictions, expectations and disappointments of exercising power in messy Vienna. How will a quite different kind of man—the cool, tough, stainless Angelo—deal with the pressures?

This emboldens the play, a more overtly sexual than moral, and though I blushed at the moment

THEATRE

when the returning Duke's irregulars disarmed Angelo's well-drilled officers and ensured that there would be no coup in dear old Vienna, I cannot regret that either.

Stephen Boxer gives a quietly terrifying performance as the corrupt incorrigible himself. At first he wears the sort of Russian peasant costume that Bolshevik intellectuals affected in the early days, later a grey uniform that, were you to add a swastika or skull emblem, would suggest the SS. And all along he justifies what might

be sartorial trickiness with the quality of his acting.

Boxer's Angelo is aggressive, cynical, arrogantly self-confident, contemptuous of lesser mortals and, in his frosty, dispensationary way, very fond indeed of power. We have heard this man's dehumanising rhetoric in our own era: the all-too-credible vow to sacrifice his brother or son to some abstract "justice"; the frightening declaration that he shows most pity when he is harshest, "for then I pity those I do not know". He will no doubt be primly spreading misery in the next century too, for he is a universal monster.

Boyd's approach, bold and even brilliant though it is, rewards some areas of the play more than others. The object of Angelo's predatory lust, Isabella, is somewhat sidelined, feel-

ingly played though she is by Clare Holman. But the brothel and jail scenes are pretty strong. When whores are lazily whipping transvestites, men, or the pimp Pompey is playing comically sadistic games with his fellow prisoners, you can see why Boxer's punitive Angelo has political appeal.

You can also see why Glenister's human, tolerant Duke has disappeared. His rendering of the great speech about the virtues of death comes across, not as a prolonged extract from the *Dictionary of Quotations*, but as a personal expression of ontological derision. After all, in a world as ungovernable as this, how does a good prince cope?

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE

Talking body language

Clothes? They're so, like, yesterday. Even royalty now knows that what really talks is the body and what you do to it: pierce it, tattoo it, cut it, expose it. Mass communication has destroyed the tribalism of costume: every kid from Tashkent to Tokyo sports identical combat pants and funky Nikes; the Mods must be turning in their parkas.

Performed, for the most part, in the nude, Gilles Jobin's *A-B-X* creates a new abstract of the human body. The three performers pull themselves through dim pools of greenish light in a series of extraordinary contortions: now headless, now dismembered, now popping with strings of tensed muscle; the low unnatural colour picking out their contours like an alien landscape.

Positions more often seen in the pages of *Readers' Wives* are rendered sexless, played out against a harsh industrial soundtrack. Such conceptualism is cut through with a knowing humour; after spending a quarter of an hour with their naked bottoms held aloft, the trio retreat with a comic wiggle of their rears, in a kind of "arty crowd you may be, but we know what you're looking ar fashion."

In a way the dehumanisation of *A-B-X* is easier to accept because of the perfection on display, not simply of the bodies themselves, but of the sustained control of the excruciating sequences they put themselves through. The clean lines of the movement pieces are framed by film footage of the arch self-mutilator Franco B in all his ghoulish glory.

Predictably, the moment the cast don clothing, they appear more exposed than before, and the sight of Jobin moaning is surprisingly grim. The final performed image of a woman standing naked with her face covered, glowing white in the glare of four spotlights, is still shockingly vulnerable, despite all that has gone before: the naked body is after all, always more than the sum of its parts.

HETTIE JUDAH

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Positively uninhibited

In his new play Brad Fraser continues to make his characters jump through the hoops of love, sex and honesty. Is it possible, so his cartoonist hero Matt is presumably asking, to manage all three at the same time? Matt is gay, in a fitfully tolerant Toronto, and the immensely successful

creator of Spum Boy and Bridge Magnet Girl, whose adventures we see him developing with his working partner, Rachel. Played at the royal Exchange by Ben Daniels, he is handsome, effervescent and projects the character's fierce intelligence, but he has now turned 30; none of his relation-

ships has lasted beyond three months, not even an early marriage (shown in Fraser's previous play, *Poor Super Man*). If the fault lies not in himself, might it be a consequence of being gay, in a world predominantly straight, or living at the time of AIDS? Airing these concerns, he embarks on an affair with Ian Gelder's politician, whose guile-fuelled domestic arrangements suggest successful hoop-jumping is nothing but desperate fantasy.

This is an uninhibited play about inhibitions. Matt's wit and honesty make him a thor-

oughly positive character, and Daniels and Ruth Lass create a convincing office relationship.

Doubts about the play surface in those areas where Fraser explores the serious follies of his politician, Martin. Here is a man who was a virgin till 35 and is now so keen to act as substitute dad to homeless wifes that he supports the soft drug habit of one and the fecklessness of another. Almost every scene where Gelder appears with young Rex (a flushed Daniel Roberts) or with the rather Yves (Nathan Willcocks) ends with him digging into his pocket for more dollars.

Matt's openness is so placed as to contrast with Martin's complicated burden of anger, longing and grievous mistakes. The rage that can be felt by the Positive (as distinct from the simply positive) for those who are unaffected steals in upon us during the play's later scenes, and Matt's own dangerous "mistake" follows logically. But while the air of withholding plans and feelings suits the character as given, the sources of his compulsions remain out of reach.

Marianne Elliott's direction seems to be acknowledging this by closing with the five characters as far apart as possible on this open stage. At other times the openness works against audibility in a play of fast Canadian talk and cultural predilections. But if the play's centre retreats from us the outer reaches do capture the quality of disconcerted lifestyles that is Fraser's particular skill.

HILARY and JACKIE

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LISTINGS

Ostrovsky at the National

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mart Hargreaves

LONDON

THE FOREST: Alan Ayckbourn adapts Ostrovsky's satirical 1870 comedy, with Michael Fassbender as a scheming tycoon who impresses his rich aunt (Frances de la Tour). Anthony Pege plays director. Lyttelton (0171-452 3000). Preview from tonight, 7.30pm. **□**

THE COUNTRY WIFE: Martin Parr plays the randy Horner pursuing Victoria Pendleton in the title role. A romp of sex, lies and a bit of pugnacious dressing. A festive programme includes Til Eulenspiegel's lusty Stompe by Stravinsky framed by arias from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Wigmore Hall (0171-635 2141). Sunday, 4pm. **□**

AN ANNIVERSARY CONCERT: The London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble return to the venue of their first concert 10 years ago with a programme of festive music and patriotic merrymaking. A festive programme includes Til Eulenspiegel's lusty Stompe by Stravinsky framed by arias from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Wigmore Hall (0171-635 2141). Sunday, 4pm. **□**

GOETHE NACHT: Marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German writer, Matthew Best conducts the City of London Orchestra and Singers in a programme of songs with a suitably lyrical theme. St John's, Smith Square (0171-222 1061). Tonight, 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE: The award-winning Budapest Festival Orchestra under its charismatic conductor Iván Fischer returns to the Royal Albert Hall here with an all-Mozart programme. With the noted pianist Alexei Lubimov as soloist in the Piano Concerto K467. Symphony Hall (0121-212 3333). Tomorrow, 8pm. **□**

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatres showing in London

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BRIEF SAMPLE: Diana Cutts plays the ditzy, calculating and fat for the charms of young Marie Bashkirtseff (Celia White) in the 1880s and figures in her posthumously published diaries. Stella Cutts directs. New End (0171-784 0222). **□**

THE DECEIVER: The lastest from David Hare's pen is a light but much more of a cross-dressing sexual romp. Kenneth Rea's production for Jet Theatre relocates it to the 1920s. Riverside Studios (0181-237 1111). **□**

SJ LITTLE MALCOLM AND HIS STRANGE AGENTS IN THE BUNNIES: Emma McGonigle in the title role of a semi-musical revival of David Hare's play about art-student failure and fascism. Comedy (0171-389 1731). **□**

RICHARD II: Robert Lindsay puts on a show of power in Marlowe's RSC production. Transfer from Stratford (0171-503 8888). **□**

THE GLORY OF LIVING: British debut for Abrams-born Rebecca Gilman's drama of excitement and pain. Queens (0171-494 5041).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

HILARY AND JACKIE (15): Anand Tucker's contrived yet witty movie about two sisters who have to cope with dad's infidelity celebrates the cult's genius. But scratch it and you discover a spoilt, selfish schemer who preyed on her family like a vampire. With Emily Watson, Rachel Griffiths.

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12): Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman are caught in a festive, gothic soap with sisters with fatal attraction. It is tempered by several seat-clutching special effects but the parallel about girl power does not seem to be abnormal. It is too sweet to digest. Griffin Dunne directs.

BULWARK (15): Warren Beatty's disillusioned senator hires a human to kill him and suddenly discovers a love for telling ugly truths. A sharp, witty, political satire. With Diane Keaton and Meryl Streep. Claude Miller directs this award-winning piece of creepy suspense.

CLASS TRIP (15): Clark French thriller about a school trip that turns into a hellish adventure of a young boy forced by his peer and fear of the future. Claude Miller directs this award-winning piece of creepy suspense.

MEET JOE BLACK (12): Brad Pitt's comic, charming Joe Black, aka death, arrives in New York to make his mark on the world. With Robin Wright-Penn.

CURRENT

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18): Christina Ricci plays a caustic,事宜ly 16-year-old who stretches up her gay best friend to get him to stand up and fight for it. L.A. a blistfully comedy on political correctness. Written and directed by Don Roos.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK (15): A 16-year-old girl who has been tormented by her past and fearful of the future. Claude Miller directs this award-winning piece of creepy suspense.

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■ POP ALBUMS

Snowpony impress

ARTS

■ TOMORROW
Critic's choice in Metro

Happy birthday suit to youth

Crazy name, crazy guys: Canada's Barenaked Ladies have put humour in the charts. Paul Sexton reports

Success in showbusiness has many occupational hazards, but one of them is not usually being assaulted with packaged food. Such, though, is the lot of Barenaked Ladies, the Canadian band who put a decade of hard labour into their newfound North American stardom — their album, *Stunt*, has gone triple platinum in America — and who will be back on an English stage next week, dodging boxes of macaroni cheese.

To describe a Ladies concert as "lively" is like calling Bart Simpson "playful," and one of the joys of their belated breakthrough is that it proves that a sense of humour and creative excellence need not be oil and water in the rock world. As they proved on previous UK visits unless celebrated times, the Barenaked boys will charm total strangers with shows of manic, Goonish jollity and damn good tunes. Plus that unusual concert tradition where the Beatles got jelly beans and Jim Jones gets knickers, this five-piece has bins of apple sauce and boxes of macaroni cheese lobbed at it.

"We're trying to curb that a little bit," says co-writer and singer Ed Robertson. "Have we gone all serious and arty, then? No; stresses bassist Jim Creeggan, they would just rather not have to play in hard hats: "Maybe one idiot in the audience would put a little more steam behind the throw and hit somebody. You get hit by food, it sucks." Robertson adds, philosophically: "But you know that going into

gig 'n' roll."

Last month at Madison Square Garden in New York, Barenaked Ladies performed at an all-star concert staged by the city's top-rated pop radio station, Z100. Lesser men would have been daunted by an audience of screaming, dreamy ten-year-olds awaiting the appearance of pin-ups such as NS Sync and 98 Degrees, but the band made

them all rock and roar, especially with a gloriously absurd closing medley that stapled together songs like *Gettin' Jiggy Wit It*, *My Heart Will Go On* and *Bittersweet Symphony*.

But, much as one smiles at their compositions such as *Be My Yoko Ono* and *If I Had \$1,000,000*, it would be misleading to file the Ladies in the novelty section. As they underline again on *Stunt* with songs such as *Alcohol* and *When You Dream*, they can do shade as well as light. "Our live shows are off the wall and fun," says Robertson, "but especially with the new record, people get a lot clearer picture of what the band's about musically. There's still fun on the record, but it's not as overt as it's been in the past."

"I don't care when people use the word 'crazy' about us because sometimes we are ridiculous," but when it's used to detract from what the band does musically, then I have a problem with it, because for me those are two very separate things. People say 'You should do stand-up,' and we always say no. It's just that you don't expect to see a band that makes you laugh, but if you come along expecting a comedy night, you'd be very disappointed."

"I like to think our music is like an honest conversation. If you're sitting with a friend over the course of an evening, you don't just make jokes all night and you don't talk serious all night."

Roberston's co-writer and singer, Steven Page, revealing some comic capers on those earlier UK gigs, senses a cultural kinship between Brits and Canadians. "There's a certain faction of Canadians that dreams for dear life to England," he says. "It's kind of the place that keeps us not being American. If we didn't have a fish and chip shop on the corner, or we weren't rushing home to see Coronation

Street, we would be American." Their ear for the absurdities of language has had audiences in this country in stitches as they played with newfound English phrases like toddlers in an Early Learning Centre. I remember them once constructing an entire song about Jeffery Cakes, and Page says they still get requests for it: "Whatever word happens to strike us, we play with," says drummer Tyler Stewart. "We talked about baps a lot, I remember. And slapper is one of our favourite words. We met these girls from Liverpool when we were there in 1996, I swear they were the original Spice Girls. They were so fu-



After a decade of hard slog, Barenaked Ladies have finally cracked it big time in America. The drawback to this, though, is that they get pelted with macaroni cheese more often

ry, drink you under the table, witty Scouse birds. They used this word slapper all the time."

"I think the biggest thing Canadians have in common with British people is that we both get embarrassed," says Page. "Americans just don't get embarrassed."

Page recalls the vexation of finding the acclaim for their shows in this country never translated into record sales, least of all in the Britpop era. "A song like Brian Wilson wasn't going to gel with Song 2 by Blur," he says. "We felt really on the verge of something in the UK, but each record never quite hit it, and by the time the third record, *Born On A Pi-*

rate Ship, came out, the ball was just dropped. We thought This is terrible, our chance has gone."

Their recent success is made more poignant by the current absence of keyboard player Kevin Hearn, now making a good recovery from leukaemia. "Now that he's recuperating, it's doubly frustrating for him that he can't be out here on tour with us," says Robertson. "It's a really hard thing when you feel like your career is at its pinnacle, but you're not celebrating it together."

The belated triumph of Barenaked Ladies is a tale of victory

against the odds by a band that will not sit comfortably in any of the industry pigeonholes. "I like diversity in music, but it's hard to market," says Robertson. "There's so much music these days, everybody wants to be able to say what they're a cross between like 'It's somewhere between U2 and Soul Coughing.' We are Herman's Hermits meets Henson's Muppets."

● *Barenaked Ladies* play Shepherd's Bush Empire next Wednesday and the Forum, London, on Feb 13. The single One Week is released by Reprise on Feb 8, and the album *Sum* on Feb 22. They will guest on the *Beautiful South's* UK arena tour in April

Cutting edge

MICHEL PORTAL

Dockings (Label Bleu LBLC 6604 HMV £8)

THE multi-instrumentalist Michel Portal has always scorned genre boundaries, especially those between jazz and avant-garde classical music.

A recent duo album with accordion player Richard Galliano, for instance, interspersed pieces by Astor Piazzolla and Hermanos Pascoal with Balkan folk; a 1995 album, *Cinemas*, embraced everything from orchestral tango to Maghreb rhythms.

Here, with his front-line instruments augmented by Marcus Stockhausen's agile trumpet and propelled by the nervy but fluent piano of Bojan Zulnikaparsic, Portal casts his musical net as widely as ever. There are vigorously scuffling clarinet improvisations over Bruno Chevillon's lithe bass and Joey Baron's scurrying drums, intricate ensemble pieces redolent of North Africa, and a plaintive wail through Carla Bley's *Ida Lupino*, featuring Steve Swallow on singing electric bass. Another rich, texturally adventurous album from one of Europe's most imaginative musicians.

CHRIS PARKER

Pale horse of a different colour

NEW POP ALBUMS: It's being doomy and gloomy that makes Snowpony so cheering, says David Sinclair



If a migraine could sing, it would sound like Snowpony. Now there's an enticing prospect

SNOWPONY
The Slow-Motion World of Snowpony (IndieWorks/R&B) R&B 11228 £15.99

AS ANY half-decent alternative rock band led by a woman might expect these days, Snowpony have been optimistically compared with Garbage and P.J. Harvey. Singer and songwriter Katharine Gifford certainly has a dark, 1990s twist to her lyrics: "I used to dream in black and white, but now I dream in red," she sings in the macabre *3 Can Keep a Secret If 2 Are Dead*.

But the trio comprising former members of Stereolab, My Bloody Valentine and Moonshake — a sort of supergroup of glam — lacks the full-on approach of Garbage, and Gifford's glacial vocal delivery has little in common with Harvey's voodoo wail. Instead they combine some fairly conventional, chords-free riffing with startling bursts of almost-dissonant horn parts that are inserted into the arrangements of numbers such as *Bad Sister* and *Snow White* like a poker thrust into the embers of a fire.

Neat little shards of feedback stab into the fabric of *Jay Way Down* and a rogue star threads an erratic course through the dancey groove of *Titanic*, while a church bell tolls the back of the mix.

"Why do I get these headaches?" Gifford sings in *St Lucy's Gate*, a woozy psychedelic interlude that sounds like a bad dream set to music. The question may be rhetorical, but rarely has the product of a sore head sounded this smart and imaginative.

CASSIUS

1999 (Virgin 7243 8 46701 £15.99) FATBOY SLIM may be at No 1 this week, but the post-Christmas album chart is not otherwise overrun with dance acts let alone French dance acts. However, like Air and Daft Punk, who were both successfully launched here at this

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 (20) You've Come a Long Way, Baby — Fatboy Slim (Sire)
- 2 (1) I've Been Expecting You — Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
- 3 (2) Ladies & Gentlemen... The Best of — George Michael (Epic)
- 4 (2) Where We Belong — Boyz II Men (Polydor)
- 5 (4) Talk on Corners — Cocteau Twins (Columbia)
- 6 (10) Show Us Your Moves — Stone Rose (Lava)
- 7 (17) Story of My Life — Madonna (Maverick)
- 8 (19) Fever — Kylie Minogue (Columbia)
- 9 (5) The Best of 1998-1999 — M People (M People)
- 10 (28) The Best of — Daft Punk (Sony)

Copyright © The Times 2000. Figure in brackets indicates last week's position

tique synthesizer sounds and feisty vocal chants pick out the melody line of *Club Soixante Quinze*, while the radio edit of their current hit single *Cassius 99*, with its Donne Summer sample, recalls the questionable thrill of 1970s disco, a style that has now been rehabilitated in a way that few people who actually lived through that era would previously have believed possible.

FOXY BROWN

Clyna Doll (Def Jam/Mercury 553 933 £15.99)

OPENING with the (presumably simulated) sound of Foxy Brown being born, *Clyna Doll* is a broadly autobiographical album which spares the listener little in the way of detail. The rapper from Brooklyn is cursing, threatening and demanding respect almost before her feet have hit the ground, the only wrinkle in the plot being that the voice is that of a woman and not a man.

A succession of heavyweight stars, including the likes of Jay-Z, DMX and Memphis Bleek, are on hand to complement her vocal assets at strategic points throughout the album and she achieves a certain rough chemistry with her various partners on tracks such as *Bonnie & Clyde Part II* and *Can You Feel Me Baby*. But in the end it's all much too frightening to be sensual.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

The Dance Album (The Hit Label AHLC61 £15.99)

IF TOM JONES can become the auteur of middle-aged cool (admittedly a few years ago now) and Cher can reinvent herself as a disco diva, then why not revive and recast Engelbert Humperdinck as the king of the 1990s dancefloor?

They hit their stride midway through this album with *Mister Eveready*, *Nutty and Somebody*, a string of ingenious, minimalist grooves that have a simultaneously galvanising and hypnotic effect. An

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

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A change of culture

A reconstructed IPC aims for a bold new future, says Raymond Snoddy

On a wall of Mike Matthew's 17th-floor office overlooking the Thames there are framed copies of ancient publications such as the *Strand Magazine* and *Tibbles*, which were owned by IPC and its predecessors.

In a new corporate brochure produced by IPC, still the largest consumer magazine company in the UK, the titles are colour-coded according to age. Nine magazines have purple spots against them, indicating that they were launched before 1899, ranging from *Country Life*, *The Field and Shooting Times* & *Country Magazine* to *Amateur Photographer*, *Gardening*, and *Cycling Weekly*.

"I am a custodian really, just passing through," says 51-year-old Matthew, who has worked for IPC for the past 28 years.

Proposed against another wall is a board that is covered in handwritten paper stickers. It represents the magazine company's ambitions for the future — which include joining the FTSE 100 and launching a magazine every year that matches the triumph of *Loaded*, IPC's hugely successful title for young men.

Matthew does not know whether such things are possible but he is going to try over the next ten years. The "ambitions" board is just one aspect to a corporate makeover announced this month to make IPC more "fleet of foot" following last year's £860 million buyout from Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch information group.

During the last years of Reed ownership IPC felt like an unloved stepchild. Reed made no secret that

it wanted to specialise in professional and business information — and that it was only a matter of time before IPC would be sold.

The issue came to a head when Matthew was refused permission to bid for *Teletext*, the French TV listings magazine — which is now owned by Emap, IPC's great rival in the magazine market.

Matthew, who was also unable to get the marketing budget he thought he needed, saw it as the last straw and warned Reed that he planned to retire this year. He believes the potential loss of his chief executive, at least, "crystallised" the decision to sell.

"I would have ended up presiding over the rise of IPC and its decline, and I wasn't prepared to manage decline," he says.

Now Matthew, with the non-executive chairman David Aronius, who worked at Emap for many

years, has drawn up his own plan for restructuring the company, which include joining the FTSE 100 and launching a magazine every year that matches the triumph of *Loaded*, IPC's hugely successful title for young men.

"We have been a bit too business-oriented," says Matthew, "and a bit too control-freakish. We need to relax and let a bit more creativity through. We are no longer constrained by Reed Elsevier. We can rewrite our culture."

Matthew entered the magazine industry as a junior in the copy department of George Newnes, later to become part of IPC Magazines. He had no qualifications other than what he calls "a sense of destiny" — a belief that he would not turn out to be average. The man



Old hand, new ideas: Mike Matthew, the chief executive of IPC, believes in greater editorial autonomy

who will be a multimillionaire when IPC floats on the Stock Exchange in two or three years was brought up in difficult circumstances in Sevenoaks, Kent, after his father, a motor mechanic, left when Matthew was eight. He still remembers the humiliation of standing up among classmates to get free school dinner tickets.

The IPC reconstruction, which will give its five divisions greater autonomy, has its darker side.

About 200 jobs will go, many of them Matthew's senior colleagues.

The first wave of eight have just departed. To achieve a flatter management structure, the role of editor-in-chief is going and there

will be fewer publishers. In future, editors will report to their managing directors. The reality is that Iris Burton, the Editor-in-Chief of half the women's titles and a former Edi-

tor of both *Woman's Realm* and *Woman's Weekly*, is leaving — as is David Durman, the Editor-in-Chief of the other half. Another casualty is Andrew Taylor, the publisher of specific women's interest titles.

"Mike is bleeding on this. These are people he has worked with and probably employed," says Terry Mansfield, the managing director of the rival National Magazine Company. The closure of *Options*, though not part of the restructuring, could cost another 17 jobs.

Matthew denies that IPC, backed by the venture capital group CenVen, overpaid for the company, thus leading to the redundancies.

He accepts that IPC's circulation figures for the first half of last year were bad. The figures for the second half, out next month, will, he says, show that IPC is on the way back. Matthew believes he will

have succeeded if in a year IPC is more dynamic and taking advantage of the huge number of opportunities in the media market.

These range from masthead publishing — TV shows linked to magazine titles — to magazine-related exhibitions and electronic publishing.

He makes no secret of the fact that he is looking for major acquisitions in the UK and would be interested in moving into business-to-business, or trade publishing.

Wouldn't it be lovely, he muses, if he was able to buy *Reed Business Publishing* or *New Scientist*, magazines that Reed Elsevier hold on to.

He is not interested in reconstructing another part of IPC history — buying *The Mirror*, now the subject of takeover attempts. That would be too extraordinary an idea even for the pieces of paper on Matthew's strategic intent board.

Mandi vacates Cosmo chair

MANDI NORWOOD, the Editor of National Magazines's *Cosmopolitan*, has been promoted to Editor-in-Chief after turning down an offer from rivals IPC to edit *Marie Claire*. Press Gazette says that she will still oversee the day to day running of *Cosmo* but will also work on new titles. She will be replaced as Editor of *Cosmo* among names being touted are Dawn Bebe the former Editor of *New Woman*, Fiona McIntosh of *Elle* and Emma Soames, the Editor of the *Telegraph Magazine*.

■ CHANGING FACES: who's going where. Charles Courier, James Sykes, Martin Thomas and Lea Gregory to head Media Edge Europe. Young & Rubicam's revamped European operation. All from other parts of Y & R (Media Week).

Greg Grunner to be a managing partner at Optimedia, from CIA Mediawork (Campaign). Dave Amer, from Turner Entertainment, to be sales and marketing director for Beeb, the BBC's commercial Internet operation (Marketing).

Chris Wermann to be head of PR and Miles Russell public affairs manager for Direct Line. Wermann from Financial Dynamics, Russell from Burton Marsteller. Roger Lowry moving to Burton Marsteller after six years with the Liberal Democrats (PR Week).

Patrick Weever quits as deputy city editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* (Press Gazette).

■ MOVING HOUSE: who's getting the business. Nationwide Building Society reviewing its £8 million account with present PR agency Leagas Delaney. Delaney Fletcher Bozell wins £2 million Harmony haircare account. BMP DDB to create a £1 million press campaign for Bentley cars, now owned by Volkswagen (Campaign).

The publisher Mills & Boon hires Band and Brown to handle its PR; the recruitment agency Office Angels engages the Red Consultancy to promote the brand (PR Week).

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EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS / SIMON WALKER

Manda Platell, left, was fired from *The Express on Sunday* by Rosie Boycott, Editor-in-Chief, right, after sales dipped below one million — and after running a contentious story on Peter Mandelson

No answer to the P45 question

Boycott has fired Platell from the Express but will she herself survive?

After the firing of Amanda Platell this week, *The Express on Sunday* has lost its fifth editor in six years, and the question that has been asked is how much muddierfing a newspaper that only years ago was the undisputed champion of Middle England endure? If it was an animal we might spare its suffering if put it to sleep.

Pidi fell out with Rosie Boycott, Editor-in-Chief of *The Express* and *The Express on Sunday*, in November when she published a report about a friend between the former Cabinet Minister Peter Mandelson (a friend and neighbour of Boycott) and a Brazilian student in the UK in which Mandelson was said to be a homosexual.

Truth of the row is difficult to tell but Platell believed that Boycott had sanctioned the story. Boycott believed that she had been blamed. What is not in doubt is that on the day of publication Mandelson delivered a handwritten note to Boycott's home; that Lordoflick, the Express proprietor, a Labour peer, made four calls to the Express news-

desk; and that the story was read to Mandelson, after which substantial cuts were made.

Three weeks later Platell read in *The Spectator* that her job had been offered to Sarah Sands, deputy editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, who had turned it down. Platell won a reprieve, partly because Paper Round pointed out that editors-in-chief ought to accept ultimate responsibility for what appears in their papers — but Platell's head has undoubtedly been on the block since then.

When the axe fell this week, it chopped not only Platell but also veteran news editor Ian Walker. Yesterday, associate editor Andrew Pierce, one of the authors of the Mandelson story, also walked the plank. He announced his resignation at a conference, saying he was sick of seeing the Sunday paper rubbished and adding that the high morale on the Sunday paper would now plummet to the level on the daily.

Platell is under an oath of silence but her supporters insist that Mandelson had vowed he

would destroy her career. Boycott's associates insist that Mandelson had nothing to do with the decision, as he has stated through his spokesman. The decision that she should go was made before the Mandelson saga, they say.

Boycott is the boss and they're not good people. They're different personalities who were bound to clash. Where Boycott is broadsheet, liberal, cerebral, a judge of this year's Whitbread Prize, Platell is a red-top tabloid veteran, an outgoing Aussie whom critics would say was over-promoted and the wrong editor for Boycott's *Express*.

Platell, moreover, was steering the Sunday paper in a different direction from the daily. Boycott has embarked on one of the most daring or foolhardy acts in tabloid history by surrounding her-

self with broadsheet journalists and transforming the once Tory and ultra-traditional Express into a New Age, new Labour newspaper for the new millennium. The P45 question is whether she can win enough new, younger readers without alienating the older readership.

Platell, I mean while, ignored the evolution of the daily and — as her staff would put it — made the Sunday paper brighter, breezier and more fun to read. What that means, as Boycott's deputy Chris Blackhurst told them yesterday, was that there was a "gulf in standards" between the daily and Sunday, his policy of saying that Platell's paper was political off-message and too vulgar.

Another nail in Platell's coffin was delivered when sales of *The Express on Sunday* slumped last month to a historic low of 973,000. *Express* conspiracy theorists say Boycott, seeking to worsen Platell's plight, cancelled the TV advertising for the Sunday title that would have kept sales above a million — and add that the *Express* TV ad campaign makes no mention of the Sunday.

Blackhurst and Michael Pilgrim now take the helm. Both worked with Boycott on *The Independent* and will need all the help they can get. *The Express on Sunday* has a staff of only 26 — compared with nearly 200 on *The Mail on Sunday* — and has suffered continual redundancies.

The cuts show at critical moments, such as 11pm last Saturday when the runaway foster parents Jeff and Jenny Brannan returned to Britain. Simon Walters, deputy editor, had to find a cash machine so that two remaining subs, due to finish their shift at midnight and catch the last train, could stay to finish the story and get home by cab. He paid the bill from his own pocket.

Sales this month are down 150,000 on a year ago. Within five years average issue readership has fallen from 4.7 million to 2.7 million. Advertising volume is down four per cent but up nearly four per cent for *The MoS*. Meanwhile *The MoS*, launched only in 1982, is selling nearly 2.3 million, up 130,000 on last year.

Seen from Boycott's chair, the logic of firing Platell is impeccable. The Sunday title will now be on-side and on-message. That, however, makes the pressure on her still greater. Since she took the chair last May, sales of *The Express* have fallen by 85,000. If her high-wire act is to succeed, which many doubt, she needs long-term commitment from Hollick and editorial stability.

The late Sir David English used to say that the instinct that made great editors worked for only one newspaper, that what made him a natural *Mail* Editor would not have worked for *The Sunday Times*. The tragedy for Rosie Boycott may be that a natural Editor of *The Independent* on Sunday (which she was) is not a natural Editor of *The Express*. Can she prove the cynics wrong?

Is Dyke the man to take over from Birt?

The Conservatives are preparing to raise the issue of "cronyism" if, as seems likely, Greg Dyke, the chairman of Pearson Television, emerges as a serious candidate to become the next Director-General of the BBC.

Mr Dyke, a multimillionaire from his days as chief executive of London Weekend Television, is a committed supporter of new Labour and one of a group, many with media connections, who sponsored the office of Tony Blair before the last election.

Peter Ainsworth, the Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, says that the job of Director-General of the BBC was so important that anyone who held the office should be seen to be beyond reproach in political terms.

"I would advise the Chairman of the BBC to think very carefully about appointing anyone directly involved in sponsoring Mr Blair's office," says Mr Ainsworth.

The BBC is about to appoint head-hunters to find a Director-General to replace Sir John Birt, who plans to leave in April 2000. The aim is to choose a candidate by the summer and to have that person in place by the autumn, to spend some time working in tandem with Sir John. The race is unusually open, with at least five internal and five external candidates.

Mr Dyke is attracting increasing attention because he is by nature an iconoclast with strong programme-making credentials and has a close relationship with Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC Chairman, from their days at LWT.

Dyke has not yet definitely made up his mind to "throw his hat in the ring", but even senior colleagues at Pearson concede privately that they would not stand in his way if the offer were made. The role of Director-General of the BBC is still seen as one of the plum jobs in world broadcasting.

It is unlikely that the Governors of the BBC would automatically rule out Mr Dyke because of his political connections. After all, Sir Christopher is a former Conservative local councillor and former chairman of the Conservative Bow Group. The issue would be whether Mr Dyke would be prepared to renounce his overt political support for new Labour. It is believed that he did not contribute to Labour Party funds while he was a broadcaster at LWT.

Friends say that if Mr Dyke decided to stand for the post, his aim would be to simplify the BBC bureaucracy and to give greater encouragement to programme-makers.

Before joining LWT in 1987, Mr Dyke, who started his career as a local newspaper reporter in West London, was director of programmes at TV-am, the commercial breakfast station. Both TV-am and TVS lost their licences in the 1991 tenders for new ITV franchises.

RAYMOND SNODDY

The death of L!ve is on the cards

WDEVER wins the battle for Mirror Group Newspapers, it is thought unlikely that L!ve TV will survive, or that new *Sporting Life* will go ahead. By shutting down L!ve media experts reckon that the group would save between £8 million and £10 million a year, while the most likely purchaser, Chris Oakley, a former director of MC, has always been sceptical about starting up a new national sports paper.

U TV, that peddler of vacuous programming, immorality in the BBC documentary *ignorance at Canary Wharf*, has failed as a local cable television network, but it

Radio, to sit at a studio microphone alongside the breakfast presenter David Banks.

Makers of television documentaries ought to

be banging down the doors at Talk for Kelvin is still up to his old tricks. As reported here last week, Carole Stone, a former producer of *Any Questions* on Radio 4, was invited to oversee its new Thursday night debate. But by Friday evening, after receiving a telephone call from Kelvin, she had backed off from further involvement in the project, murmuring the words: "interesting, instructive."

She had thought that MacKenzie wanted serious discussions about, say, the euro. What he really had in mind was such topics as "why Sean Connery is moving back to Scotland from Spain", and celebrity panelists.

He is displaying a touching faith in his power to turn tabloid journalists into broadcasters: Jane Moore, the Sun columnist currently being tried out as a co-presenter with Scott Chisholm, moves next week to a new show, *My Favourite Year*, which consists of an interview with a celebrity, interspersed with news clips and music from the year in question. The format was devised by Kelvin's journalist daughter Kershaw.

FOR THE first time BBC News has introduced compulsory redundancies among its senior current affairs producers, and up to 17 face the chop. The reason: the television service, which is already winning battles to make daily news more accessible.

QUIET celebrations are under way at *The Observer*. The newspaper, the only Sunday broadsheet to register a rise in sales in December, has moved back above the psychologically important target of 400,000 this month, touching 430,000 last week. This was despite efforts by the *Independent* on Sunday to spike *The Observer's* reviving by cutting its own cover price to 50p.

Roger Alton, the Editor of *The Observer*, says: "We've got some great people here. I just hope to keep it up." He adds:

"My biggest challenge is to keep traditional readers while appealing to the new."

The *Independent*'s Editor-in-Chief, Simon Kelner, in part of a wider shake-up across both titles, has reacted by sending across his right-hand man, Tristan Davies, to work alongside the *IOS* Editor, Kim Fletcher, the former deputy editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, on some form of swift redesign.

HE WHO pays the piper calls the tune? This thought popped into my head at the launch of *Public Purposes in Broadcasting: Funding the BBC*, a grand event at Carlton House Terrace, where eight of Britain's leading economists gave brief resumes of their worthy contributions to the sponsored book.

Funny enough none of them fundamentally questions the existence of the licence fee, or threatens to keep the BBC Chairman Sir Christopher Blackadar awake at night. The fees

paid by the BBC for each chapter? Some £5,000 to £10,000.

CAMELOT is about to renew its agreement with the BBC to screen the National Lottery. I hear that Bazal Productions, which won the competition to supply a new programme starting in six weeks' time, will now run the draw at the beginning. But it can run into trouble over plans to roll the balls one by one to settle bones of contention between people: eg, should a neighbour's overhanging tree be cut down?

Bazal has been dazzled by the success of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* and hopes that the producer, Celador, will come up with an even better look after Bazal's 13-show run ends.

ROWAN ATKINSON is being wooed to bring back his Blackadder character for the Millennium Experience. But I hear that his production company, Tiger Aspect Productions, is less than thrilled. First, at the leak and, secondly, at the prospect that its hottest property, having conquered Hollywood, should be sidetracked to save the Dome.

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Millennium man? Rowan Atkinson as Blackadder

2000 DOCUMENTARIES

Anatomy of a hoax

C4 has made a programme on the couple who duped it, writes Carol Midgley

I F two people had wasted £40,000 of your budget and several weeks of your time playing a spectacularly humiliating practical joke, what would you do? Report them to the police? Devote your life to sending taxis and pizza delivery boys to their front door? Or smile, forgive and say "shucks, it happens?" Channel 4, with incredible magnanimity, seems to have opted for the last approach. Five months after a couple exposed the channel to ridicule by pretending to be father and daughter for the documentary *Daddy's Girl*, executives have not only kissed and made up with the pair, but made yet another film about them.

Daddy's Girl never saw the light of day. It was withdrawn hours before transmission after the girl's real father happened to see the programme trailer and alerted Channel 4 to the ruse. Excerpts from it, however, have been interwoven into Channel 4's latest offering, *Who's Been Framed?*, which pioneers a hitherto unexplored area of programme-making — the anatomy of the in-house cock-up.

During an hour-long *mea culpa*, Stuart Smith, 29, and Victoria Greetham, 19, explain how they hoodwinked the television crew for more than four months. Smith, who had pretended to be 39 and intensely possessive of his "daughter", says the hoax fulfilled a fantasy. "It felt good to be a middle-class racehorse trainer instead of a plumber's son with a criminal record," he says. "I swapped lives."

Greetham, a law student and aspiring model, displays a naive, insouciant attitude to a prank that could have cost the director, Edmund Coulthard, of Blast films, his career. "Not everything you see on TV is real," she says. "The documentary that was made was real,



The "father" and "daughter" of *Daddy's Girl*, Stuart Smith and Victoria Greetham: "The film-makers could easily have blown my cover," says Smith

it's just that there were some lies involved in it."

The hoax did, however, raise important questions about the future of the genre. Michael Jackson, the chief executive of Channel 4, said the episode was a new public abuse of the trust that once existed between film-makers and their subjects. Directors agree that, from now on, nobody will be taken at face value; subjects will be vetted right down to

their birth certificates, and "good faith" is history.

Others say that such a hoax was waiting to happen. The public's appetite for fame had been dangerously whetted by watching ordinary people become overnight celebrities thanks to the success of documentaries such as *Driving School* and *The Cruise*.

But will making a documentary about a documentary, and committing more money

to already shown themselves to be frauds, expose Channel 4 to accusations of excessive navel-gazing? After all, why should we believe the word of two proven liars the second time round?

The commissioning editor, Peter Dale, says: "We are not trying to make this a moral tale. That would seem self-congratulatory. We're trying to look at how the public sees us

now. This is part of the tables turning. The power is shifting. We are no longer like gods commanding the public to do what we want them to do, and this was a good way of exploring this change in attitude."

To some extent people now see broadcasters as a means to an end rather than purveyors of entertainment. They can use us to become famous. If it makes us more vigilant, that is not a bad thing."

The hoax has also fuelled the argument that the documentary is now a spent force. Ordinary Joes have been exploited to the point where it has all blown up in television's face.

Smith says he could easily have been found out: "They could have blown my cover."

There is a book that lists all the trainers and they could have found out that I didn't exist."

In one scene of *Daddy's Girl*, included in the new programme, Stuart fights with Victoria's "boyfriend" after a night out. The undertone is that he seems to be incestuously obsessed with his daughter, which, in rating terms, is almost too good to be true.

With the benefit of hindsight it is easy to blame sloppy research or poor judgment, but such a sophisticated con, involving dozens of people,

would probably convince most of us. When the hoax emerged Greetham gave *The Daily Telegraph*'s reporter a mobile phone number for her real father to obtain a comment. It turned out to be another ruse — she had actually given them Smith's number and he supplied "outraged" quotes as if he were the real father.

Peter Dale, who commissioned the film for Channel 4, admits that the hoax angered and embarrassed him, but concedes: "Perhaps sometimes we believe the story presented to us because we so want it to be true."

During the programme, Smith tells us he and Greetham have split up. He has lost his job at a Huddersfield pub but does not regret the scam: "I get a kick out of this and it keeps me off drugs."

Peter Dale says the film gives an insight into a man so desperate for fame and an escape from the mundanity of life that he went to these lengths. "When you get behind the facade you see quite a troubled man," he says. "He felt he was living out some kind of scheme to show that he would have been an achiever if he had been given another life."

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EDUCATION

A lesson from church schools

Tony Blair has sent his children to Roman Catholic schools for good reason, argues Tony Mooney

Cherie and Tony Blair had cause for quiet satisfaction when the GCSE league tables were published last month. The London Oratory, the school attended by their two sons Euan and Nicky, was named as the eighth most improved secondary school in England over the past three years.

As a school with 88 per cent of its pupils obtaining five GCSE passes at grade C or above, the Oratory again emphasised the academic advantages of a Roman Catholic education.

Now it has been announced that the Blairs' daughter Kathryn will also attend a Catholic school in Hammersmith. Yet critics claim that these advantages are not real and that the apparently superior results are the result of covert selection. So how does one find out whether Catholic schools offer a better standard of education than their state counterparts?

Surprisingly, there has been little independent research into the topic in Britain. However, one study in 1990 did analyse the differences in examination performance of secondary schools in the former Inner London Education Authority. It found that after taking background factors into account, "the examination performance of students attending Roman Catholic schools is higher than those attending county schools".

Another clue comes from the Chief Inspector of Schools. Since his inspectors have started to name very good and excellent schools, the growing list looks as if it has been obtained from a Vatican education propaganda booklet.

The Americans have been more systematic in their analysis of the value of Catholic schools. Researchers at the University of Michigan followed more than 3,000 students from 184 high schools and found that Catholic schools, despite not having students who were advantaged

culturally, economically or academically, were pushing them harder in mathematics than other types of school. A greater percentage of pupils took high-level maths courses and this was consistent across the ability range, suggesting that Catholic schools are "especially equitable in who completes advanced course work".

A large-scale inquiry into the early school and post-school records of about 60,000 students in more than 1,000 high schools found that Catholic schools were performing much better on a number of fronts than their state counterparts. This was despite the fact that they had less money and fewer well-paid teachers who taught larger classes of pupils who were mainly from the more difficult areas.

The study found that it was the most disadvantaged students (blacks, Hispanics and those from low socio-economic backgrounds) who were most likely to profit from attending Catholic secondary schools. Pupils with discipline problems were likely to benefit even more from their education than those who were well behaved. This was probably because the Catholic schools contained their discipline problems without resorting to expulsions at the same rate as state schools.

But why are Catholic schools so successful in educating young people? Dr Andrew Morris, the deputy executive secretary of the Diocesan Schools Commission in Birmingham, offered some reasons in the journal *Research Papers in Education*, also drawing on recent doctoral research undertaken at Warwick University.

Dr Morris argues that Catholic schools have an inherent advantage because of the coherence and distinctiveness of the community they serve. Parental attitudes, lifestyle, manner of speaking and thinking are all "consonant with the school and there is, therefore, a process of mutual reinforcement". According to Dr Morris, it is

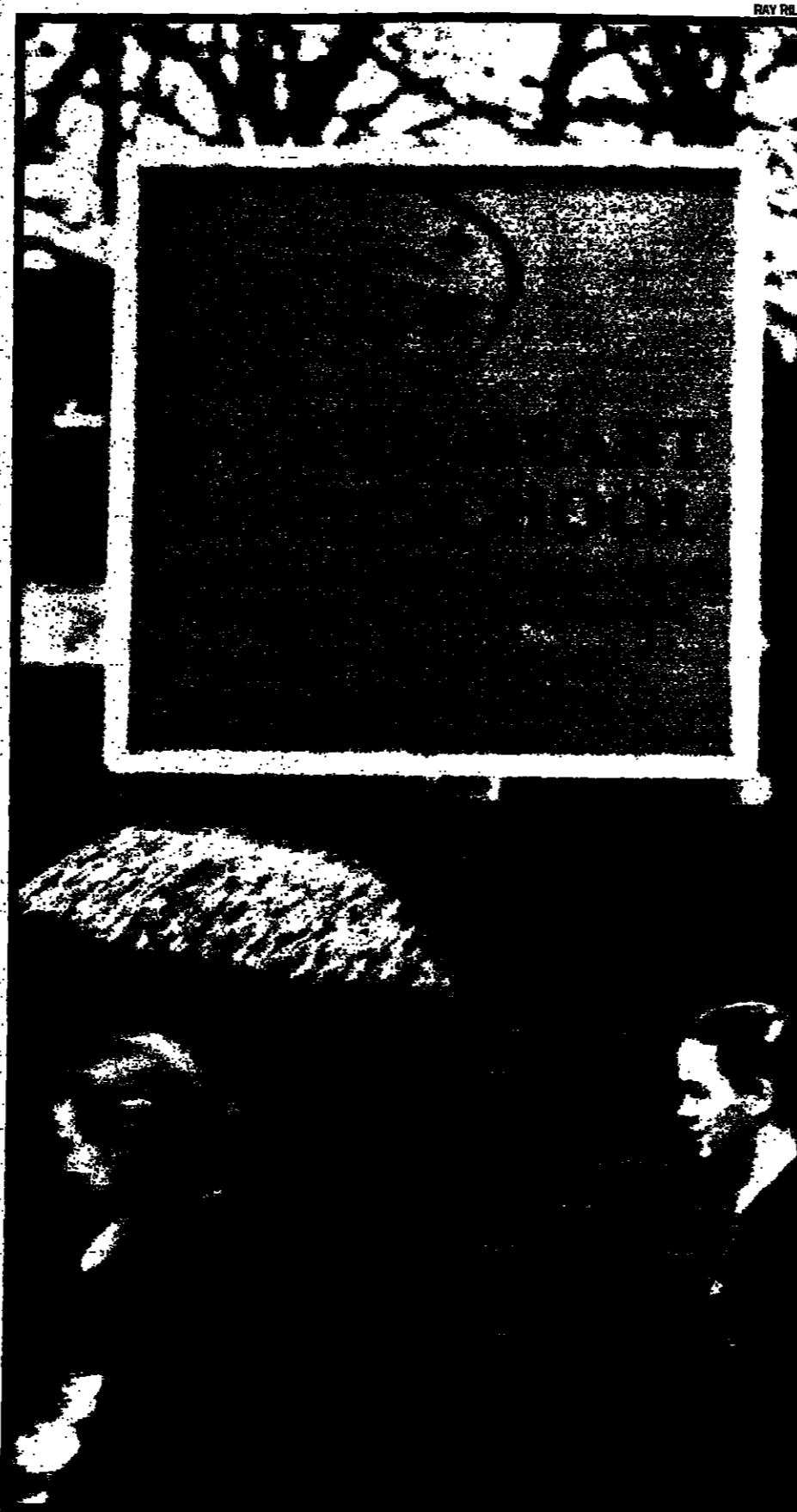
the strength of teacher commitment to schools that makes them such places of academic excellence. Roman Catholic teachers who go out of their way to work in Catholic schools will often see the school as a religious community and their self-image and level of commitment may be enhanced and a virtuous circle established.

The expectations of its teachers by the Catholic Church also play a part in the creation of teaching excellence. Catholic teachers are expected to give affection, respect and service to their pupils beyond what is required by educational law or other caring professions.

Another feature is good discipline. Dr Morris believes that this emanates from several sources. The fact that Catholic schools operate within a hierarchical and religious culture gives both parents and teachers greater potential for social control. "As such," he adds, "it helps to create a climate of conformity that is likely to assist academic achievement."

Student ease within Catholic schools may also come from the knowledge that in the light of Christian doctrines, transgression of school norms, if acknowledged and repented, will not necessarily result in being ostracised. This is why questions of discipline and possible exclusion from Catholic schools causes so much angst to those who have to make the decisions.

There is little debate in Britain on why Catholic schools are academically and socially effective. Government-sponsored research would not be wasted — the knowledge acquired might be of value in improving all schools.



Sacred Heart High School in Hammersmith has the approval of the Blairs

Acting up at the RSC

Theatre studies are a valuable practical experience, says George Turnbull

Dreaming though it may seem, every drama student dreams of performing on the big stage, and last week a company of 34 A-level students took to the boards at the Royal Shakespeare Company's The Other Place theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. For the first time, students from the School of Performing Arts at Stratford-upon-Avon College were given the opportunity to perform five 30-minute plays three times a day for two days.

The plays, each an original, were created for the practical part of the A-level, which accounts for 40 per cent of the final assessment. Despite the creative freedom, stringent exam rules still applied.

The plays were performed as professional productions before an audience, but the lecturers were not allowed to direct. Nevertheless, the calibre of the work was high.

Stratford is one of the most sought-after drama colleges in the country and students travel from as far as Bury



A-level drama at the RSC under exam rules. The work counts towards the final assessment

ham. Some alumni, such as the comedian Ben Elton, even moved to the area just to attend the college.

Drama, it seems, is not just for potential Kate Winslets or Joseph Fiennes; it has a positive influence on those entering other "performance" professions. Francesca McVeigh, 18, who is going to study law at University College London, says: "I want to be a barrister. And this course gives us confidence, an ability to communicate,

cate to work as a team and to lead others. Problem-solving comes naturally, too, when you are putting a show together. Acting is important to me... after all, that's what barristers do."

Mark Taylor, the school head, agrees. "Role play is an essential part of learning and the key skills mentioned by Francesca are essential to survival in competitive international companies. Nationally, more than 9,000 students sit the examination."

Developed for introduction next year will ensure that their importance will be emphasised, not only within theatre studies but across the whole A-level and GNVQ provision."

The original A level in theatre studies was developed through the college more than 20 years ago and is examined by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. Nationally, more than 9,000 students sit the examination.

First crack in the fees ceiling

The university fee regime which has prompted a group of Oxford students to risk flouting academic careers without the slightest prospect of advancing their cause may seem positively benign a few years from now. Those who captioned that £1,000 a year would be the thin end of a much larger wedge seem certain to be proved right before long.

Having found that the demand for places has easily withstood the introduction of fees, the leading universities are looking forward to a relaxation of the Government's £1,000 limit. Oxford's business school plans for a degree costing up to £15,000 a year may be at the extreme end of the continuum, but for those competing in the world market, the present fee income is a drop in the ocean.

Rethinking Higher Education, a pamphlet published today by the Institute for Economic Affairs, makes the case for a sharp increase in the student contribution to the cost of higher education. Professor Thomas Lange, director of the Centre for Labour Market Studies at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, questions the need for even the current size of the university system, let alone further expansion. He argues that more of the financial burden should fall on the students because they benefit most.

Professor Lange's case rests partly on contentious and dated calculations on the rate of return to individuals and the State from higher education. They suggest that because of the level of public spending, the economic benefit to the UK is less than in countries such as America and France. The advantage to the individual is also less than in most developed nations, but it is higher than the "social return".

More recent attempts at the same exercise have suggested that the gap between private and social benefits has narrowed greatly. With the abolition of grants and the advent of tuition fees, it is safe to assume that there will be little difference in years to come: if graduates' employment prospects are as poor as Professor Lange predicts, the individual benefits may soon be minimal.

As the number of students rises again, Professor Lange believes that higher education will serve mainly as a screening process for employers. The quality of many courses and the calibre of students will be so low and the competition for jobs so fierce that higher education will confer the credentials necessary for success in the race for employment without raising productivity or skills levels. He

is particularly scathing about the likely effect on jobs, citing Germany as an example of high levels of qualifications and unemployment. "The mystifying assumption that, by improving Britain's education and training record, somehow unemployment will disappear, is not just debatable; it is misleading at best and at worst it is utter nonsense."

The thesis does not square with the recent forecast commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment, which saw the potential for another 1.5 million graduate jobs over a ten-year period. But it raises the valid question of what level of fees students will be willing to pay if the financial advantages of higher education become more marginal.

Professor Lange makes a logical case for universities to be set free to charge what the market will bear, leaving students to vote with their feet for a smaller higher education system in which low-quality courses go to the wall. Yet can any government afford to leave access to the top universities entirely at the mercy of the market?

Every proponent of unfettered tuition fees assumes that bursary funds will be available for those who cannot afford to pay thousands of pounds a year for a degree course. Invariably, American universities are quoted as the model to emulate. But the level of donations to American universities by graduates and corporations is out of all proportion to the British system, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Only by charging even higher fees to those who can afford to pay would our universities be able to build up the funds necessary for "need-blind" admissions.

The burden on a resentful and electorally crucial middle class would be considerable because the idea that graduates would be the ones to repay the costs of tuition is already a myth in many homes.

With the means-testing of student loans, the Government has limited still further the availability of affordable finance for undergraduates. Increasingly, parents are the paymasters as university replaces independent education as a drain on the family budget. The £1,000 limit is unlikely to change before the next election, but few would bet on it remaining for long thereafter. The new administration will have a fine balance to strike between popular pressures and the need to preserve the quality of higher education.

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

There's still time for schools to register



It is not too late for your local school to join in our Free Books for Schools promotion.

The Times, with *The Sunday Times* and Walkers crisps and snacks, offers you the chance to take part in Britain's biggest books giveaway. Its aim is simple: to help schools to provide more books for pupils to expand their imaginations, creativity and curiosity. Anyone and everyone — parents, pupils, teachers, friends and relatives — can join in the scheme, simply by collecting tokens from *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and Walkers snacks.

There are more than 150 titles for schools to choose from, including novels, atlases, picture

books, fiction and non-fiction, wildlife and science, dictionaries and audio and Braille titles. Each book requires either 100, 250 or 500 tokens. The books are suitable for ages five to 16 and are divided into approximate reading abilities from key stage 1 to key stage 4, and P1 to S5 in Scotland.

Schools simply select their free books from a list of approved titles and send off enough tokens for their order. Many of the titles can be ordered for as little as 100 tokens each.

Tokens will appear every day in *The Times* until March 27 and four tokens are published weekly in *The Sunday Times*. Tokens are also appearing in *The Sun* and the *News of the World*.

THE TIMES

SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

This form must be completed only by school teachers. To get your free books for schools kit to participate in the scheme, complete full details of your school in block capitals below and send form to: Free Books for Schools, Registrations, FREEPOST (LE6 004), Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7BR. Closing date February 28, 1999.

School name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Our nominated member of staff is _____

Position in school _____

Signed _____

For information purposes only:

1. Please state your local education authority _____

2. Please state the number of pupils at your school _____

Although there is no obligation or cost associated with registering for the Free Books for Schools promotion, please only register for this scheme if you intend to participate.

This enables us to invest as much money as possible in supplying free books to participating schools.

Please note only schools can register. We may wish to use the information provided for marketing purposes.

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Code C1

CHANGING TIMES

Richard Evans expects young rider to top Ascot bill Saleel can spearhead double for Forristal

ON AN afternoon when every pound of lead in the saddle of runners at Ascot will be an onerous burden, the ability to remove weight from a horse's back using the claiming allowance of amateur or conditional riders could prove invaluable.

This points to Richie Forristal enjoying the riding day of his life in today's gluepot conditions. The young Irish amateur, voted point-to-point rider of the year last season, has been a revelation in the National Hunt ranks this term and, with 20 winners, is only four behind Alan Dempsey, who has enjoyed the advantage of a constant supply of chances from the powerful Mary Revey yard.

Forristal is quite small by jump jockey standards, weighing around 9 stone, but is strong as well as stylish and is already on the books of Dave Roberts, the top jockey's agent. In the Silver Doctor Open Novices' Handicap (2.05), he teams up with Saleel, with whom he has forged a successful partnership.

Victories in similarly soft



TODAY'S RACES
ON TELEVISION

ground at Market Rasen and Folkestone, plus an even better performance in defeat just behind the useful Kingmark, highlight his chance from a favourable mark on his handicap debut. Lucy Wadham, who took our a full licence last summer having earlier held a permit, boasts a 4.6 per cent strike-rate with runners under Rules and has her seven-year-old in rude health.

Salems Mate looks harshly treated off 12 stone and the main threat to Saleel is likely to come from Taufan Boy, twice a course winner this season in similarly demanding ground.

Toby Balding, Taufan Boy's trainer, should get close in the Rosling King Hurdle (3.40) with Brave Tornado, another mudlark who is chasing a treble after wins at Ascot and Cheltenham. However, the pair likely to fight out the finish are Jim Old's Three Partings and The Butterwick Kid, ridden by Forristal.

Three Farnthires showed markedly improved form to win on his seasonal reappearance at Wincanton on Boxing Day and, being a half-brother to Simpson, should be seen to even better effect over this longer trip. His hurdling is still open to improvement, which sways me marginally in favour of The Butterwick Kid.

Although Richard Fahey's runner is 4lb out of the handicap, Forristal's 5lb claim compensates and the dual-purpose performer looked on to follow after winning with ease at Wetherby over Christmas. His jumping in the mud was particularly fluent that day and he quickened away from his rivals in the manner of an improving performer.

Three-runner novice chases, where tactics invariably play an important role, are not ideal betting races and, while Nipper Reed is chosen for the PML Lightning Chase (2.40), a watching brief is advised.

The shape of the reshuffled Victor Chandler Chase (3.10) has changed since Saturday with the deletion of Or Royal, top weight for the abandoned running, and that could have a significant impact on the result. Celibate now heads the weights and that could prove too much for this sparsely-made eight-year-old.

By contrast, the rise in the weights will favour Get Real, but Nicky Henderson's front-running course and distance winner may find this heavy ground against him. Monnaie Forte has also shown his best form on faster going.

However, in a tricky race, Hill Society, a short-head second to Champieve in the Arkle Trophy last March, just gets the nod ahead of Call Equiname, who returns from a 134-day absence but invariably runs well fresh.



Nipper Reed has just two rivals as he chases a treble in the PML Lighting Novices' Chase at Ascot today

ASCOT	
THUNDERER	2.40 Nipper Reed
1.00 Buckland Lad	3.10 Get Real
1.30 Native Fling	3.40 Brave Tomato
2.05 Taufan Boy	4.10 LANCASTRIAN JET (nap)
Timekeeper's top rating: 3.10 GET REAL	
GOING: HURDLES, HEAVY, CHASES: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES) TOE JACKPOT MEETING	

12.30 DURHAM RANGER HANDICAP CHASE

(2.788; 2m 3f 110yd) (6 runners)

101 PSSP DURHAM RACE 95 (G 5) Mr Novel J Gelfand 12-11-10 L Aspell

102 21-121 BUCKLAND LAD (F 5) Mrs R Heffernan D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

103 2-121 TAKE WARM 13 (G 5) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

104 2-121 THE CROWN 13 (G 5) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

105 PPR/32 SPY DESSA 7 (nap) F Carew A Newcomer 11-0-2 N Williamson

106 BETTING: 5-4 Buckland Lad, 7-2 Take Warm, 8-1 The Crown, 9-1 Spy Dessa 8-2

Long handicap. Action 9-4. Salet 3-1.

BETTING: 7-4 Buckland Lad, 11-4 Take Warm, 8-1 The Crown, 9-1 Spy Dessa 8-2.

1000 NO COMPROMISE RACE

Buckland Lad won at York, so let's hope he's not the handicap

FORM FOCUS Buckland Lad had a great start at York and only got 2-9 in the handicap

1.00 EBF NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (QUALIFIER)

(£3,500; 2m 4f) (7 runners)

201 210-1 BUCKNELL 26 (G) Queen Elizabeth II Handler 7-1-5 ... M A Fitzgerald

202 21-122 FINE ATTITUDE 22 (G) Mr Novel J Gelfand 8-11-10 L Aspell

203 2-121 MY TURN 27 (G) F Dutton, F Ford & D Simcock 1. Webs 5-1-10 V Gribble

204 2-121 THE CROWN 23 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

205 2-121 PRINCE OF YORK 25 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

206 5-3 BROWN SEAL 23 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-11-4 B Weston

207 1-5 KELLY'S CONQUEST 23 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 8-10-9 N Williamson

BETTING: 5-4 Bucknell, 2-1 Prince of York, 7-1 My Turn, 8-1 Fine Attitude, 9-1 The Crown, 10-1 Spy Dessa 8-2

1000 MUSHLIF 7-1-8 J Jones 14-5 6-11 8-10-9 N Williamson

Bucknell had a great start at York and only got 2-9 in the handicap

1.30 BUCKTAIL HANDICAP CHASE (£5,420, 2m) (4 runners)

201 1-122 DAINTES CAVALIER 20 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 9-11-10 G Bradley

202 21-121 THE OUTBACK WAY 88 (G/F 5) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 9-11-10 G Bradley

203 5-1311 NATIVE FLING 21 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 9-11-10 G Bradley

204 2-121 THE CROWN 23 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 9-11-10 G Bradley

205 2-121 THE CROWN 23 (G) Mrs A Lead D Giselle 9-11-10 G Bradley

206 BETTING: 6-4 Daintes Cavalier, 8-4 Native Fling, 9-2 The Outback Way, 10-1 The Crown

1000 SUPER COIN 10-11-11 H Williamson 1-1 on 8-10-9

Daintes Cavalier had a great start at York and only got 2-9 in the handicap

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MOTOR RACING

Toyota opt to go solo in the fast lane

By KEVIN EASON

THE lure of Formula One is tempting yet another leading car maker into an ambitious programme that could cost more than £250 million just to get on to the grand prix grid. Toyota, the third-largest motor manufacturer in the world, announced yesterday that it wants to join the Formula One racing circuit, probably in 2003.

The decision stokes up the prospect of a contest between Toyota and Honda, its Japanese rival, which comes to Formula One next year with its own team. Moreover, the wider significance will not escape teams competing at present: they are concerned about whether they can survive a future that looks as if it will be dominated by multinational corporations.

If Honda, Toyota seems to want to go it alone by making both the engines and chassis — a departure from the conventions of the sport in which motor manufacturers have usually been happy to supply engines to independent teams. Hiroshi Okuda, the Toyota president, has appointed André de Corraze, who oversees the company's efforts in the Le Mans 24-hour Race, to set up a base in Germany in preparation. Several teams in Formula One would have been hoping for Toyota to choose a partnership. Arrows has no engine supplier, while Jordan uses engines from Mugen-Honda, a deal that might yet be usurped by the full entry of a Honda works team.

Dr Mark Jenkins, senior lecturer at the Cranfield School of Management, said that the entry of Honda and Toyota signals the end of the age of the motor racing entrepreneur, of men such as Sir Frank Williams and Eddie Jordan. He believes that Formula One will be ruled from the boardrooms of big business. Not only will the mavericks of the sport be overwhelmed, but the implications for the British motorsport industry, which is worth £1.5 billion a year to the country and employs 150,000 people, could be far more serious. Formula One faces the possibility of a "brain drain" as companies, such as Toyota and Honda, poach the best talent but base their activities in their home states or convenient locations, such as Germany. Already, Honda,

is employing members of the now defunct Tyrrell team, but it has not given any commitment to working from Great Britain.

Formula One has traditionally been located in the Golden Triangle bordered by Cambridge, Oxford and Reading, known as Motorsport Valley," Jenkins said, "but if manufacturers want to bring things in-house, they will have no particular commitment to Britain, only to their own needs and costs."

The human face of Formula One also faces extinction. Pioneers, such as Enzo Ferrari, founded a tradition of entrepreneurship that is continued today by men such as Williams, Jordan, Giancarlo Minardi and Peter Sauber.

Jenkins gave warning that the days when Williams could cajole tyres from rivals and conduct business from a telephone box to get his grand prix team on the grid would be replaced by corporations that want the worldwide publicity that is offered by Formula One. In the meantime, Toyota might have to buy out one of the independents to realise its ambitions.

Formula One has traditionally been dominated by teams set up by entrepreneurs who have developed relatively small companies that can respond very quickly to the demands placed on them by Formula One racing," Jenkins added, "but the signs are that the motor manufacturers want more control. They want to differentiate their products in the marketplace from the competition and, to do that, they want their own teams. Now Toyota is entering, the question is how long before the other manufacturers in Formula One decide they have to do the same?"

Whatever happens, the prospects of another Eddie Jordan emerging to run an independent team in the present, expensive climate of Formula One seem to be remote. When Jordan ended his first season in Formula One in 1991, he was £4.5 million in debt and scoured the circuits for young and cheap drivers. In contrast, the British American Racing team starts this season with a five-year budget of £250 million and employs the second highest-paid driver in the sport, Jacques Villeneuve, on a £10 million salary.



Four years after seeking asylum, Dagne makes her senior women's international debut tomorrow

BOXING: BIRMINGHAM HEAVYWEIGHT CAPITALISES ON KICK-START TO HIS CAREER

Reid gets British title chance

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

PELI REID, the Birmingham heavyweight, who is being tipped to follow in the footsteps of Lennox Lewis, will get the chance to underline his potential when he challenges Julius Francis, of Peckham, for the British championship at York Hall on January 30.

Francis was to have met Danny Williams, another Londoner, but, when the challenger pulled out with an eye injury, Reid was called in. He was in training to challenge Vitali Klitschko, of Ukraine, for the European title, but Frank Warren, the promoter, convinced him that the British title was more important. "Anyway, Klitschko will be accommodated

after Pele beats Francis," Warren said.

Reid came to boxing at the age of 23 by way of kick boxing. His father, who named his first son Santos, wanted his second to take up football, but, despite his Christian name, Pele Reid was more impressed by the exploits of Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee than the great Brazilian and took up martial arts at the age of 11.

The kids I ran with in Aston were a hard lot and there was a chance I would get into trouble. That is why I chose another route and I'm proud of what I've achieved so far. I

want to set a good example." By 18, he had lifted the kick boxing world championship, after winning the European crown with a second-round knockout. When he turned to professional boxing, he joined Brendan Ingle, because he liked the style of boxing that the Sheffield trainer had taught Herol Graham and Sean Hamed.

Reid is unbeaten in 13 contests and all his victories have been inside the distance. Eight have ended in the first round and only one has gone beyond three. Ingle thinks Francis will go out in two.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL Euroleague: Manchester 123, Warrington 88; Thames Valley 126, London Towers 81.

BOWLS HOPTON-ON-SEA, Norfolk: World indoor championships: Singler, Third

round 5 Pees (Wales) bt R Newman (Eng) 7-2, 7-0, 7-1, 7-1.

CYCLING

ADELAIDE: Team Down Under: Third

stage 100km time trial: 1, C Stannett (Aus) 56m 12s; 2, D Smith (Aus) 56m 13s; 3, J Bailey (Aus) same time; 4, M Blackstock (Aus) 56m 15s; 5, F Van Haaren (Neth) 56m 16s; 6, T O'Gorman 57m 50m; 7, M

Smith 57m 51s; 8, D Stannett (Aus) 57m 52s; 9, C Stannett (Aus) 57m 53s; 10, M Blackstock (Aus) 57m 54s.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second division:

Liverpool 1, East Fife 0.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Challenge Cup

Final: 1, Ipswich Town 2, Macclesfield 1.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE CUP: First round:

Second round: 1, Port Vale 3, 2, Fleetwood 2.

FA PREMIERSHIP ACADEMY LEAGUE:

Under-16: Man City 2, Blackpool 2.

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION:

Second division: Bournemouth 0, Wycombe 2; Charlton 2, Northampton 3; Chelsea 3; Oxford 2, Ipswich 2; Swindon 1; Wrexham 1.

PONTINS' LEAGUE: Premier Cup: Final:

Birmingham 0, Sunderland 2; Leicester 2; Preston 1, Derby 1.

SECOND DIVISION: 1, Luton 2.

PONTINS' LEAGUE: Premier League:

First round: 1, Birmingham 2, 2, Fleetwood 1.

THIRD DIVISION: YOUTH CUP: Third-

round: 1, Harlepool 3, Barnet 0;

Northern Forest 2, West Brom 2.

SPANNISH CUP: Fourth round, first leg:

Asthetic Bilbao 2, Celta Vigo 0; Deportivo

Faro 2, Valencia 1; Real Valladolid 2,

Real Zaragoza 2, Osasuna 1.

SNOOKER

NEWCASTLE, Nations Cup: Wales 5,

Northern Ireland 3.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

* denotes off-field

Nationwide League

Third division

* Mansfield v Rotherham (7.45)

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Third

round: 1, Brighton & Hove Albion 2, 2, 3,

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION:

Final: 1, West Ham United v Peterborough United (7.10).

AVON INSURANCE ACADEMY LEAGUE:

Under-18: 1, Crewe Alexandra v Aston Villa (12.00); 2, Leeds United v Middlesbrough (1.00).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Cambrian v Alyn (7.30); Flintshire v Wrexham (7.30); FAW Intermediate League: 1, Premier division: Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 2, Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 3, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 4, Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 5, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 6, Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 7, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 8, Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 9, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 10, Ballymena 1, Portadown 0; 11, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 12, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 13, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 14, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 15, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 16, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 17, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 18, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 19, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 20, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 21, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 22, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 23, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 24, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 25, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 26, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 27, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 28, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 29, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 30, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 31, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 32, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 33, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 34, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 35, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 36, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 37, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 38, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 39, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 40, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 41, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 42, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 43, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 44, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 45, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 46, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 47, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 48, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 49, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 50, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 51, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 52, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 53, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 54, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 55, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 56, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 57, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 58, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 59, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 60, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 61, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 62, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 63, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 64, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 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132, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 133, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 134, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 135, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 136, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 137, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 138, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 139, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 140, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 141, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 142, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 143, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 144, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 145, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 146, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 147, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 148, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 149, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 150, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 151, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 152, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 153, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 154, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 155, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 156, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 157, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 158, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 159, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 160, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 161, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 162, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 163, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 164, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 165, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 166, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 167, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 168, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 169, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 170, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 171, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 172, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 173, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 174, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 175, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 176, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 177, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 178, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 179, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 180, Portadown 1, Ballymena 0; 181,

FOOTBALL

West heading in direction of Newcastle

BY GEORGE CAULKIN AND RICHARD HOBSON

NEWCASTLE United directors were understood to have persuaded Taribo West of the merits of a permanent transfer to Tyneside last night after agreeing a £4.2 million fee with Internazionale for the Nigeria defender.

West had previously stated his preference for a loan arrangement after failing foul of Mircea Lucescu, the Serie A club's Romanian coach. Having finally contacted West, who is preparing for Nigeria's African Nations Cup qualifying match with Burundi on Saturday, United were confident enough of a positive outcome to reserve a room in a Newcastle hotel for the Lagos-born centre half. A medical team has also been put on standby, although West's international commitments will delay his arrival.

West, who won the Uefa Cup with Internazionale last season, has not started a league match for almost seven weeks, saying that Lucescu has "put me in the shadows". Newcastle were first alerted of his availability last month when Michel Basilevitch, his

adviser, travelled to England to talk to interested parties. Ironically, Liverpool's interest in West has cooled only because their manager, Gerard Houllier, is confident of signing Steve Howey, of Newcastle, under freedom of contract this summer.

Middlesbrough's decision to dispense with the services of Marco Branca has met with a querulous response from the Italian centre forward, who claims to know nothing about his supposed retirement as a

result of a serious knee injury. The FA Carling Premiership club issued a statement on Wednesday, saying that it had reluctantly accepted medical advice that a knee injury sustained by Branca last April had brought a premature end to his career, 34, said yesterday: "I don't know why the club is saying this. I'm doing rehabilitation work in Milan, but I'll be up in Middlesbrough in a few weeks to talk to the club."

Wolverhampton Wanderers, of the Nationwide League first division, have appealed to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) to release Robbie Keane from the world youth championships in April. The FAI have so far failed to respond to a request by Wolves to ignore Keane for the under-20 competition in Nigeria.

Steve Bull, the club's record goalscorer, will return to light training next week after initial fears that a knee injury would bring his career to a close.

Moussa Sait could be on his way out of White Hart Lane after defying George Graham, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, and flying to join the Algeria squad for their game against Tunisia on Sunday. Graham will contact the Football Association for guidance on dealing with Sait's "disappearing" act after saying: "He has shown a lack of respect to the club and the fans, and without question, he'll be seriously disciplined."

The agent of Mark Viduka has claimed that the Celtic forward is "sick and tired" of the club's hard line over his return to Parkhead and will consider legal action to resolve the ongoing dispute over his £3 million transfer from Croatia Zagreb. Viduka is desperate to resume his playing career after recuperating from the emotional stress that he insisted lay behind his walkout after just one training session in Glasgow.

However, Celtic's continued insistence on him receiving his hefty signing-on fee – believed to be as much as £1.5 million – in instalments while he proves his long-term commitment to the club has left Viduka exasperated. "I'm acting not under crisis management, but purely good business management. I've learnt a lot here and I thought that throwing money at the equation was the right way to go. Now we might have to take one step backward to move two steps forward."

Lombardo, 33, the former Italy international, joined Palace from Juventus for £1.6 million in August 1997.

"Attilio served us well," Goldberg said. "We're sorry he's leaving, but it is the same situation as it was with Matt."

ATILIO LOMBARDO, the Crystal Palace midfield player, is expected to complete a move to Lazio today for a fee of about £500,000 (Russell Kempson writes). The former Juventus and Sampdoria player flew to Rome for discussions with Lazio officials yesterday.

Lombardo's move is the latest in a series of departures from Selhurst Park as Mark Goldberg, the Palace chairman, attempts to cut costs at the Nationwide League first division club. Marcus Bent has joined Port Vale for £375,000 and Matt Jansen was bought by Blackburn Rovers for £4.1 million on Monday.

"Attilio served us well," Goldberg said. "We're sorry he's leaving, but it is the same situation as it was with Matt."

West available

John Hollins, Swansea City manager, house in Chelsea, jokes that it costs him £420 every time he wants to get back into Wales, such is the expense of crossing the Severn Bridge, but that he would be happy to pay a fiver if it meant beating Derby County at home in the FA Cup tomorrow. Either way, this is small money compared with the £370,000 it took to pack Alan Curtis off out of Wales 20 years ago.

Curtis departed Swansea for Leeds United in 1979 as the club's record transfer sale and the League's joint-top scorer from the previous season, but he stayed at Elland Road for only 18 months.

Before leaving the Vetch Field, Curtis had helped Swansea from the lower end of the fourth division into the second.

While Curtis was away, Swansea stayed put. Within six months of his return, bought for half the fee that he was sold for after flopping at Leeds, the Swans were in the first division. The following season, managed by John Toshack, they led the league for a while and remained in contention for the championship until April.

A string of defeats towards the end saw Swansea finish in sixth place, but still the

club's highest League finish. Now, as the fourth-round tie with Derby approaches, Curtis, in his fourth spell with Swansea – three as a player, now as assistant manager – says that these are the best days at the Vetch since the two-season stay in the top division.

The hairs on the back of your neck stand up and you get a tingling sensation," Curtis said. "The last time we had that was when the club was in the old first division."

Since then, keeping count of the managers has kept busy the fingers of fans who remember using them to play Curtis' goals [32 in the 1977-78 season].

Swansea have had 12 changes of manager in 15 years, three parting company with the club in an eight-month spell prior to the arrival of Hollins last July. Two incumbents in the past three years, Kevin Cullis and Micky Adams, each survived less than a fortnight. Only 15

months ago, the club was in turmoil and Curtis could barely believe what was happening.

It was becoming a laughing stock, bordering on

John Hollins and **Alan Curtis** have no dying Swan.

"I came here because this was an opportunity for me to use the experience I had from playing, coaching and managing – some good experiences, some bitter ones," Hollins said. "What I have learned is that a club should be run and how a club should not be run. We've put that into practice, but we have only just started."

"Alan and I have been together for six months. I have not bought, loaned or sold anybody. We are just trying to get our experience into them and make them play. It was a sad place when I arrived, but not now."

Until decamping to Swansea, Hollins had spent all his football life with clubs in London. With Chelsea, he played in two FA Cup finals, the first in 1967, against Tottenham Hotspur, when Curtis was at school in South Wales. "In those days, you were either a Spurs, Manchester United or Chelsea supporter," Curtis recalled, noting that he had gone with Spurs because "I was a funny Greaves man".

Not a Hollins man? Not then. It took Curtis 21 years to come round to the idea, but now they are a team. Swansea are on the rise again. Derby beware.

Rugby Union

England put the case for leniency

BY MARK SOISTER

ENGLAND will discover next week what penalty, if any, the International Rugby Board (IRB) intends to impose in its latest sparring match with Twickenham. Having been found guilty last week of "conduct prejudicial to the interests of the board", the Rugby Football Union (RFU) met yesterday's deadline by submitting its defence and plea for leniency.

The IRB had taken its action because, it said, the union had relegated on the commitment to support the board in its stance against England's leading clubs, who in a legal submission to the European Commission in April, challenged its authority and control over certain areas of the game. In essence, the union's lawyers argued yesterday that Twickenham did not have a case to answer and that its behaviour, while perhaps regrettable, had not damaged the board and therefore no fine or other punishment was warranted. The board disciplinary committee has indicated already that it will not suspend England from the World Cup, but the prospect of a heavy fine remains.

The English clubs want to be able to negotiate their own commercial agreements for competitions in which they participate and they maintain that the board's control amounts to restrictive practice. In a separate case last month, the board withheld a £60,000 grant to the union for failing to prevent the unofficial cross-border Anglo-Welsh friendly matches.

Richmond is to appeal against the dismissal of Robbie Hutton, a flank forward, during the Allied Dunbar Premiership game away to Gloucester. Hutton was sent off in the final minutes of the match for allegedly stamping, but, having studied a video recording, the club says that it will defend Hutton at a disciplinary hearing.

Gloucester Spartans opted yesterday not to appeal against a decision to ban its entire first team after a brawl during a league match against Cinderford. Thirteen players have been suspended for a fortnight, starting on Monday, while two others, Bobby Fowke and Stuart Brazil, were banned for 35 days after being sent off during the game, which was abandoned five minutes before half-time. Cinderford were exonerated of any blame.

Malcolm Pearce, the millionaire owner of Bristol, agreed yesterday that the protracted nature of merger talks with London Scottish was harming the game, but insisted that the action was necessary to safeguard Bristol's future. Pearce said that without a guarantee of promotion to the top division of whatever structure is in place next season, he has had to take his controversial action.

Ireland's summer tour to Australia has been reduced from six to four matches because the Irish RFU could not guarantee the availability of its strongest side for the full tour.

Three of England's Five Nations Championship matches this season will be controlled by referees from the southern hemisphere. Only their first match, against Scotland, will have a European in charge – David McHugh, of Ireland.

Ed Morrison, the leading English referee, will be in action on the championship's opening weekend, on February 6, when he takes charge of Scotland against Wales at Murrayfield. **FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP REFEREES:** Feb 6: Scotland v France (P Marshall); Feb 7: Scotland v Wales (E Morrison); Eng 1st Test: England v Scotland (D Gough); Feb 13: Scotland v Ireland (D Brown); Feb 14: Ireland v England (G Wilson); Feb 15: France v Wales; Li Fleming, Scot; Mar 28: England v France (C Hawke); Apr 12: Scotland v Ireland (D Brown); Wales v Eng (A Watson); SA

Morrison: Murrayfield date



Hollins, left, and Curtis have revived a club that had been in turmoil for years until they came together six months ago

Reborn Swansea take wing

David Powell on the men bringing back the glory days to Vetch Field

John Hollins, Swansea City manager, house in Chelsea, jokes that it costs him £420 every time he wants to get back into Wales, such is the expense of crossing the Severn Bridge, but that he would be happy to pay a fiver if it meant beating Derby County at home in the FA Cup tomorrow. Either way, this is small money compared with the £370,000 it took to pack Alan Curtis off out of Wales 20 years ago.

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Rugby Union

Greed supplants dignity in soul of the Five Nations

GERALD DAVIES



Rugby Union
Commentary

ment would have been substantially devalued.

The problem is that so many – from the players to the administrators at Twickenham – repeat endlessly the axiom that the championship cannot do without England, and believe it so intensely, that they are creating the impression that it is so. Critical though their presence is to the tournament, they are not, if push came to shove – as it clearly did this week – indispensable, certainly not in the existing unstable climate.

What the union in England will also have come to understand is that it could be isolated. In July 1996, it may have thought that it had outgrown the championship and that competition against the southern hemisphere nations would approximate more to its standing in world rugby. The prospect was mooted that, with France, they could fashion an alternative Five Nations Championship to include the three nations of the southern hemisphere. After England's disappearance last summer and the turmoil it is suffering in its relationship with the International Rugby Board, those three countries are no longer so emancipated of the idea.

They may have had a good case, except that the property for sale was the Five Nations Championship in its entirety, not bits of it. Each country is dependent on the others; there is a mutualism of interest.

The argument goes that the championship cannot do without England. This is true – but the championship cannot exist without the others either. Take out any one country and the tournament is significantly less attractive. For example, Wales are down on their luck at the moment, but we only need to go back a couple of decades to appreciate what their absence would have meant then. The tournament

is kilter with the others. France could not immediately be a party to the negotiations, but had committed themselves firmly to the principle. England believed that, because of their higher percentage share of the potential television audience, they had a claim on the greater share of the money. They decided to pursue their own individual contract for all matches at Twickenham.

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For the time being, it is in rugby's best interests to act collectively in order to broaden the game globally. This will not occur if countries choose to act selfishly.

By then, any sense that decisions may be determined in bar-room civility will be long gone. At the moment, with so much acrimony born of past grievances, one can only wish things to be as they once were. At least such hobnobbing chumminess ensured that common sense and honour prevailed. Then, the game was harmonious and had a deep sense of its own dignity.

BOWLS

Players benefit as seeds fall

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

THE failure of the top-ranked players in the world indoor singles championship at Potters Leisure Resort in Norfolk has delighted those who have campaigned for making the sport's televised events more accessible.

The top 16 players on the World Bowls Tour ranking list were seeded through to the second round, but only six survived their opening matches.

Mervyn King, the No 4 seed, from Norfolk, who was beaten by Alex Marshall, an unseeded Scot, on Sunday, admitted that there is very little to choose between those in the top 16 and the rest.

"We were just lucky to be in the right place at the right time to earn the points that have put us in pole position, but there are lots of good bowlers around and I'm not at all surprised by what's been happening," he said.

Yet there is another factor. This year, because the field's been increased to 48, the

NETBALL

Essex suffer setback

ESSEX Met's hopes of retaining their English Counties League championship have been dealt a blow after they failed in their bid to rearrange their final match against Middlesex, the leaders, which is scheduled for April 10 (Cathy Harris writes).

The champions will be missing Amanda Newton, their Commonwealth Games bronze medal-winning goalkeeper, who will be playing for a New Zealand club in March and April.

Despite being offered several dates by Essex Met, Middlesex, who will be without Helen Lonsdale, another player to

accept an offer to play in New Zealand, have struggled to reach a suitable alternative.

Pat Meadows, the Essex Met coach, said: "Initially, I was a bit peeved, but now I've got used to the idea. We're simply going to have to work our socks off."

Although the All England Netball Association had agreed for two matches between the leading contenders

OLYMPICS

British official accuses Salt Lake

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

A LEADING British Olympic official claimed yesterday that Salt Lake City should lose its right to stage the 2002 Winter Games, but admitted it was not practical.

Simon Clegg, the chief executive of the British Olympic Association, said that unless there were drastic changes to the bidding process, the Olympic movement would lose any credibility it still retained.

He claimed that members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) behaved in an improper manner during their visits to Great Britain during Manchester's bid for the 1996 and 2000 Games, but a lack of evidence prevented an inquiry from being launched.

His revelations followed more damaging allegations surrounding the Salt Lake City bid, with one member of the bidding team claiming that a suitcase containing \$5,000 (£3,000) was carried to wine and dine members of the IOC.

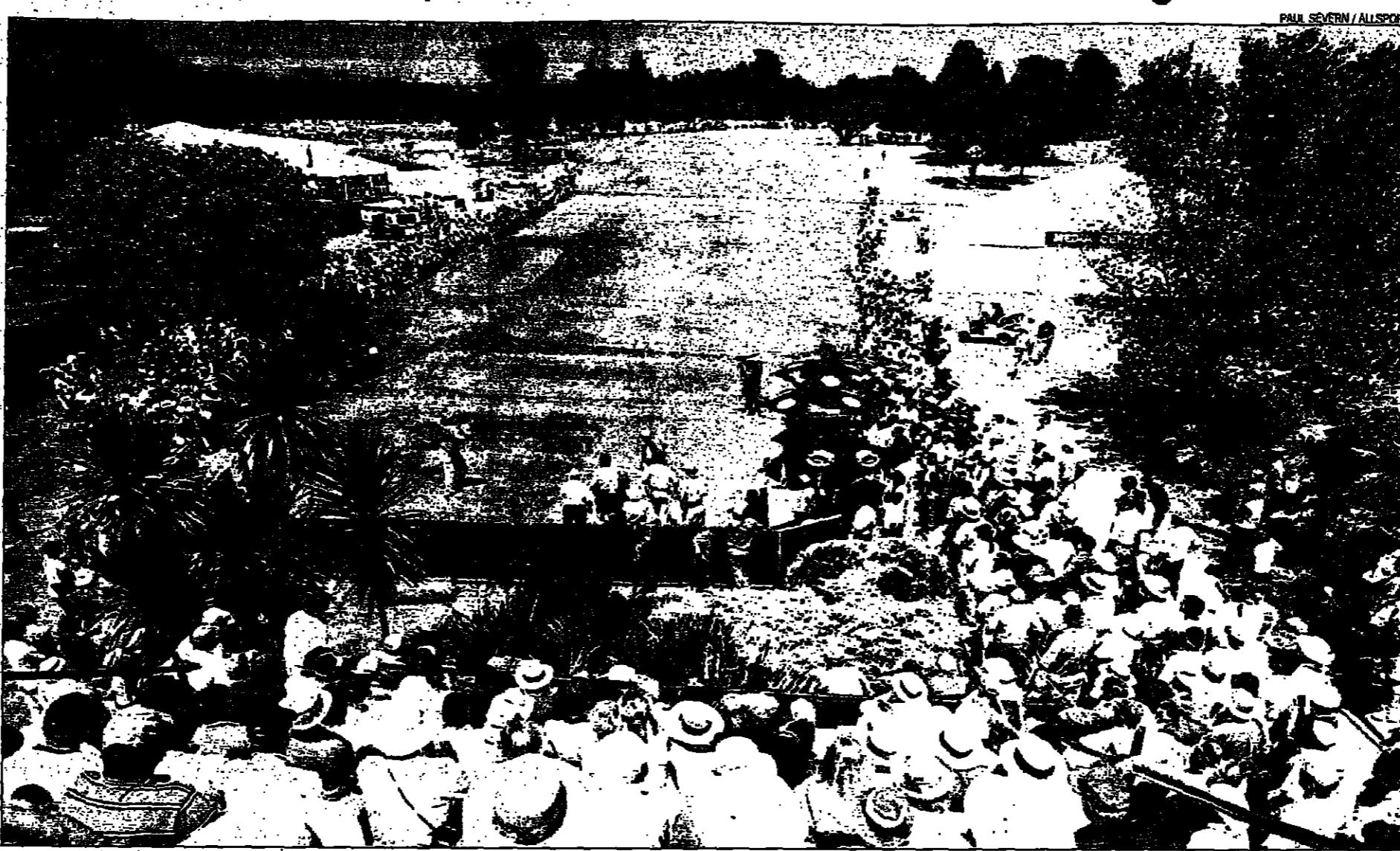
Piilo Haggman, of Finland, has already resigned her seat on the IOC ahead of the official inquiry into the Salt Lake City bid and a further 12 members are set to follow when the findings are published next week. Clegg said: "In a perfect world, Salt Lake City wouldn't be allowed to host the 2002 Games, but the practicalities mean that finding an alternative at such short notice would be almost impossible."

He said that suspicion had not been pointed at the three recent British bids — Birmingham (1992) and Manchester (1996 and 2000) — but added: "There were certain allegations made about IOC members while they were in Manchester. The complaints were forwarded to the IOC, but were hard to substantiate."

Junichi Yamaguchi, a senior official in the Nagano team that bid successfully for the 1998 Winter Olympics, claimed yesterday that records concerning its bid were destroyed after IOC members asked that they be kept secret. He said \$14 million (£8.5 million) was spent on entertaining 62 IOC officials, but added: "We were concerned that if the documents were made public, it could cause unpleasantness for the IOC."

GOLF: FORMER ENGLISH AMATEUR CHAMPION AMONG LEADERS AFTER FIRST DAY OF SOUTH AFRICAN OPEN

Garbutt makes most of early start



Els of South Africa, watched by a packed gallery, tees off during his round at Stellenbosch yesterday. He started promisingly, but finished the day four shots behind the leaders

THERE are days at a golf tournament when the leaders are determined not so much by one player's edge over another as by other factors. The day of the first round of the South African Open was one such. The weather made a big difference. Those who started early played in calm conditions, but those who played later faced a gusty wind and intense heat as the temperature rose to nearly 40C.

Garbutt, whose best finish in a European tour event was seventh in the Dutch Open last year, went to bed at 9pm on Wednesday, woke seven hours later and was on the first tee at 6.50am. He played steadily, birdieing three of his first four holes before three-putting from 70ft on the 6th. Coming home was harder, and he could be more difficult for them today, when they tee off between 11.30am and noon.

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Snippets and snips of carefully cut reality

At her Bristol practice, the Norwegian vet Trude Moseie meets Thomas, a canary with an infected toe. She decides to amputate and fetches her surgical nail-clippers. Zot. Over in Taunton, Tristey Bristol, a snark-stall proprietor, has rejoined the local health club for the fourth time. Will she be able to stick to the regime this time?

Whoosh. On a farm near Carmarthen, there's a cow with a lacerated udder. Keith Leonard must attempt his first blood transfusion. We'll stay with that story for a good 30 seconds before — zap — it's over to Sean in Glasgow, who is just mounting the scales at the slimming club. He's lost two pounds, despite his secret chocolate biscuit binges!

On *Fat Files* (BBC1), they separate the tiny item fragments with a fuzzy screen and electronic interference sound-effect. Don't bother to flip channels, this tells

us, we're doing it for you. They don't employ this device on *Vets in Practice* (BBC1), but the morsels are equally bite-size.

Granada's recently leaked pitch for a major new ITV current affairs slot proposes to chop the programmes into short attention-grabbing segments. Apparently, this will capture the "zeitgeist". "Zeiggeist", by the way, is German for "having a minute attention span". If Granada hopes to pack viewers from programmes such as *Fat Files* or *Vets in Practice*, its Burning Topic Issue McDipper will have to be very short indeed.

Both programmes are harmless. They offer mildly interesting episodes from the lives of ordinary people. Breaking the stories into ten pieces and jumbling them up lends a sprightly sense of urgency, suggesting that events are occurring simultaneously when they obviously aren't. In the case of mixed veg that is modern factual

television, you hardly notice the boring old turnip-like stories because they are diced up with the bright, dramatic caroty ones and the sweet little peas.

Veets in Practice was subtitled *Bonnie and Clyde*. Fortunately the animals in this instalment were not riddled with Tommy-gun bullets, but some of the injuries were gory enough to make a hard-boiled film fan queasy. I began to feel like the squeamish zookeeper in *The Fast Show*, who can't touch a gate because it has got camel spit on it. If cuddly Rolf Harris's *Animal Hospital* makes you go "Aaah!", this programme elicits more of an "Urgh!"

The vets themselves are very decorative, but that merely heightens the contrast with their patients. Cute little Clyde, for instance, had been hit by a bus. His tiny feline jaw was a mangled mess; his eyes

bashed to bits and his leg smashed. Pretty blonde Fiona performed what looked like a superb piece of reconstructive surgery, stitching, wiring and pinning his leg with a sort of double-ended lollipop (that's a thousand quid to you, and I'm robbing myself).

Pretty blonde Trude only had to deal with Bonnie's unsavoury canine skin condition, until Thomas arrived. Then she clipped

off the canary's toe, on camera. I am still shuddering.

The tone of the programme is gently upbeat. Upbear is flavour of the month. But nasty old reality keeps intruding. Over on the farm, pretty, dark-haired Keith had to improvise, collecting cow blood in an insecticide spray pump. Blood transfusions for cows are tricky operations, which carry serious risks. "See it, Do it. Teach it," Keith reflected. He was at stage two. The cow died. Maybe he should leave stage three for now.

But the sad death of the cow was nothing compared with what *Fat Files* held in store. The programme has been following the progress of five unusually overweight people as they struggle to diet. It is not an advice programme, and there is no aim to analyse as *Horizon's* harrowing *Living on Air* (BBC2), on the effects of eating disorders.

The tone aims to be positive and

cheerful, which is not unreasonable, except that gross obesity can be a serious emotional as well as physical problem. Snackbar Tracey and Glaswegian Sean are doing just fine. Tracey comes from a family of caterers, but thinks you make spaghetti bolognese by stirring tomato ketchup into mince. She also feeds her daughter Casey half a packet of biscuits. Milky Ways and crisps? for breakfast, an emergency two small massacres. One was allegedly carried out by Serbs on Albanians, the other vice versa.

The programme was superseded by the discovery of the atrocities at Racak, and the commentary had to be amended at the last minute. It is extremely timely. Professor Ranta's team has been asked to return to investigate Racak, and the programme illustrates the shameless cunning and sheer persistence of the official obstruction it will face.

This genial electrician had surgery to reduce the size of his stomach. He died six days after the operation. His wife agreed that the material could be used, perhaps as a sort of tribute. At the end of this glib, bitty programme, it wasn't the sort of memorial I would want.

Dispatches (Channel 4) went to Kosova. It had permission to accompany an independent team led by a Finnish forensic expert, Professor Helena Ranta, investigating two small massacres. One was allegedly carried out by Serbs on

Albanians, the other vice versa.

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BBC1

- 8.00am Business Breakfast (52990)
- 7.00 Breakfast News (T) (2249)
- 9.00 Kifroy (T) (630613)
- 9.45 The Vanessa Show (T) (5845483)
- 10.55 News; Weather (T) (771377)
- 11.00 Real Rooms (7271754)
- 11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (7828613)
- 11.35 News; Weather (T) (192409)
- 12.00pm Call My Bluff (76358)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (62226)
- 1.30 Regional News; Weather (T) (63632613)
- 1.40 Neighbours (T) (6519229)
- 2.05 Insideout. The chief investigator uncovers an alleged suicide, but soon discovers there's more to the case than meets the eye (T) (747893)
- 2.55 Going for a Song (8370358)
- 3.20 The Weather Show (T) (270120)
- 3.25 Children's BBC: Playtime (8370378)
- 3.45 Super (8862009). 5.50 Saturday on the Road (8120211). 4.05 Rugrats (826071)
- 4.20 7.5. W. Friday (T) (4397174). 4.55 Newsround Extra (1638918). 5.10 Blue Peter (8314628)
- 5.35 Neighbours (T) (802174)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (551)
- 6.30 Regional News Magazine (803)
- 7.00 Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook! Carol Smillie and Andy Kershaw attempt to create a meal against the clock using mystery ingredients (T) (2700)
- 7.30 Top of the Pops performances by S11, Another Level, All Seeing I, 3 Colours Red, Juliet Roberts, Bryan Adams and Mel C and Blockbuster (T) (777)
- 8.00 Vets in Practice Sem' pulls out all the stops to save a horse with a potentially fatal condition, while Emma is called out to assist an epileptic dog (T) (1648)

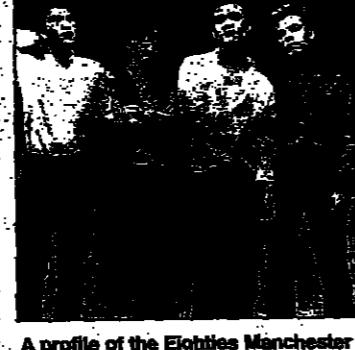


The Welsh sprinter Colin Jackson joins the sporting quiz (8.30pm)

- 8.30 A Question of Sport With guests Tim Henman, Laura Davies, Rio Ferdinand and Colin Jackson (T) (3483)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (8919)
- 9.30 Parkinson Guests include: Caroline Aherne, Prince Naseem Hamed and Gary Barlow (T) (655532)
- 10.25 Poldark (1982) A family's home is invaded by spooks who gain access through the TV set. Supernatural chiller, starring JoBeth Williams, Craig T Nelson and Heather O'Rourke. Directed by Tobe Hooper (T) (876183)
- 12.10am The Stand-Up Show Comedy series, hosted by Ardal O'Hanlon (5625065)
- 12.40 The Big End (T) (561255)
- 1.10 The Unshameable Returns. (1992) An occult expert teams up with a professor to track down the supernatural killer of four students. Horror sequel, starring David Warner. Directed by John Paul Quigley (T) (91946)
- 2.50 Weather (442897)
- 2.55 BBC News 24 (2028326)

BBC2

- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Harry Jeremy (2695731). 7.05 Telebabies (2747848). 7.30 Secret Agent and Co (5619280). 7.55 Short Change (203822)
- 8.15 Trisha (6142280). 8.20 Tax-Mania (8597036). 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts (8424483). 8.50 Johnson and Friends (8495657). 9.00 Storytime (7675938) 9.10 See, You, See Me (6284003). 9.30 Numberline (8057735). 9.45 Come Outside (8045990). 10.00 Telebabies (8622009). 10.20 Megamania (3903358)
- 10.30 Look and Read (3918228). 11.10 Landmarks (1282925). 11.30 English File (8714). 12.00pm Scans (94700). 12.30 Working Lunch (83254). 1.00 Johnson and Friends (7483355)
- 1.10 The Antiques Show (T) (2827282)
- 1.40 The Arts and Crafts Show (5610281)
- 2.10 Indoor Bowls and Racing from Ascot Bowls: early quarter-final action from Great Yarmouth. Racing: Coverage of the 2.40, 3.10 and 3.40 (46519280)
- 5.00 Tennis: Australian Open. The key action from the fifth day (9613)
- 6.00 The Simpsons (T) (T) (579975)
- 6.20 The Simpsons (T) (T) (9366113)
- 6.45 Robot Wars (T) (805900)
- 7.15 Electric Circus. The latest entertainment news (T) (134193)
- 7.30 Country House. The family are horrified to learn that an illegal game has been held on part of the estate (T) (829)
- 8.00 Gardening from Scratch Helen Yemm demonstrates how to renovate old borders, while Jojo Morris helps Jen and Rob plant their fall garden (T) (7290)
- 8.30 Garden Stories. Advice on dealing with the most common problems gardeners face (T) (10265)
- 8.40 Glimme. Glimme Tom receives a visit from a suicidal home help and Linda finds romance with a sexy motorcycle courier (T) (9261)
- 9.30 Bang, Bang, It's Reeves and Mortimer. The Stats interview model Caprice and a crazed Hilary kidnaps a quartet of celebrities (481). (25938)
- 10.00 The Young Ones Mike gets hold of an atom bomb (T) (75823)
- 10.30 Newswatch With Kirsty Wark (T) (431700)



A profile of the Eighties Manchester band the Smiths (7.15pm)

- 11.15 Young Guns Go for It! The Smiths. Last in series (T) (185848)
- 11.45 The Talent. Short-film showcase introduced by Mark Lawson (T) (650848)
- 12.35am Indoor Bowls World Championship Highlights (7474003)
- 1.20 Six Days, Six Nights (1994) Premier. Two sisters have become fastidiously entwined with their best efforts to keep apart. Thriller, starring Bessie Davis. Directed by Diana Kuyas (283033)
- 2.55 Weather (4428410)
- 3.00 BBC Learning Zone: GCSE Revision: Geography (170830). 5.00 Close

HTV

- 5.30am HTV Morning News (80782)
- 6.00 GMTV (8504998)
- 6.25 Trisha (T) (837820)
- 10.30 This Morning (T) (24945919)
- 12.15pm HTV News (T) (812087)
- 12.30 HTV Luncetime News; Weather (T) (23700)
- 1.00 WEST: Shorthand Street Minus issues an ultimatum (83174)
- 1.00 WALES: Wish You Were Here? (93174)
- 1.30 Snooker: Nations Cup. Live coverage of the match between England and the Republic of Ireland (T) (5325461)
- 3.15 HTV News Headlines (T) (2799464)
- 3.20 HTV News (T) (279837)
- 3.25 CITV: Mop-top's Show (2806700) 3.35 Tiburcio (985193). 3.40 Animal Stories (9873358). 3.51 Adam's Family Tree (825025). 4.20 Gladiators: Train 2 Win (8292584). 4.50 Top Ten of Everything (8956483)
- 5.10 A Country Practice (5557826)
- 5.40 The Early Evening News; Weather (T) (433193)
- 6.00 Home and Away: Diana makes big plans for Clive (T) (854564)
- 6.25 WALES: Wales Tonight; Weather (T) (527200)
- 6.30 WEST: HTV Weather (270272)
- 7.00 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right New series (T) (2416)
- 7.30 Coronation Street Jack and Vera leave the Rovers (T) (483)
- 8.00 AIRLINE Cabin crew trainees learn what it's like to be confronted by terrorists (T) (6716)
- 8.30 Neighbours from Hell (T) (7551)
- 9.00 Tilly Trotter Part three of the Catherine Cookson drama, starring Carol Norris, Simon Shepherd and Madelaine Newton (34) (T) (7551)
- 10.00 News at Ten; Weather (T) (58453)
- 10.30 HTV News and Weather (T) (730613)

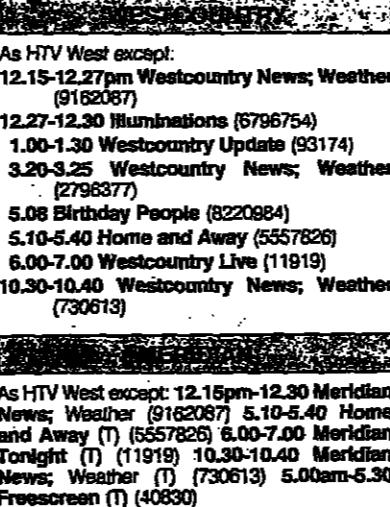


Denise Van Outen joins Ian Wright for a late-night chat (10.40pm)

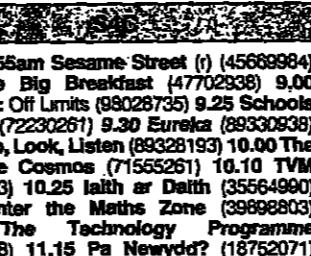
- 10.40 Friday Night's All Right With guests Denise Van Outen and the Fair Show duo Paul Whitehouse and Charlie Higson (480205)
- 11.00 The Young Ones Mike gets hold of an atom bomb (T) (75823)
- 11.30 Newswatch With Kirsty Wark (T) (431700)

CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
- 12.20-12.30pm Central News; Weather (768735)
- 1.00-1.30 Wish You Were Here? (93174)
- 2.30-3.25 Central News (2796377)
- 5.10-5.40 Shorthand Street (5557826)
- 6.25-7.00 Central News; Weather (532700)
- 10.30-10.40 Central News; Weather (730613)
- 12.40am FILM: Victim of Beauty (581946)
- 2.15 Box Office America (9620149)
- 4.20 SeaQuest (2022). 5.15 Horizon (2429)
- 5.30-6.30 Asian Eye (4942101)
- 6.30 HTV News (T) (279837)



- As HTV West except:
- 12.15-2.7pm Westcountry News; Weather (9162057)
- 2.27-3.30 Illuminations (5796754)
- 1.00-1.30 Westcountry Update (93174)
- 3.20-3.25 Westcountry News; Weather (2796377)
- 5.08 Birthday People (8220984)
- 5.10-5.40 Home and Away (5567826)
- 6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (11919)
- 10.30-10.40 Westcountry News; Weather (730613)



- As HTV West except: 12.15pm Anglia Air Watch (6994542). 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (6878735). 1.00-1.30 Save Your Bacon (581). (T) (83174). 5.10-5.40 Shorthand Street (5557826)
- 6.00-7.00 Anglia News (T) (532700)
- 10.29 Anglia Air Watch (567025). 10.30-10.40 Anglia News and Weather (T) (730613)
- As HTV West except: 12.19pm Anglia Air Watch (6994542). 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (6878735). 1.00-1.30 Save Your Bacon (581). (T) (83174). 5.10-5.40 Shorthand Street (5557826)
- 6.00-7.00 Anglia News (T) (532700)
- 10.29 Anglia Air Watch (567025). 10.30-10.40 Anglia News and Weather (T) (730613)

CHANNEL 4

- 5.55am Sesame Street (T) (4584996)
- 7.00 The Big Breakfast (686522)
- 9.00 Schools: Off Limits (5274267). 9.25 Schools at Work (7005803). 9.30 Eureka (8042803). 9.45 Stop, Look, Listen (8047558). 10.10 TVM (9256078). 10.25 Ulster Unearthed (922483). 10.45 Enter the Maths Zone (5634026). 11.00 The Technology Programme (6101071). 11.15 Stage One (6287822)
- 11.30 Powerhouse (T) (5822)
- 12.00pm Sesame Street (T) (29236)
- 12.30 Bewitched (T) (21342)
- 1.00 Pet Rescue (T) (81716)
- 1.30 Earthscape (68421551)
- 1.40 Danger Within (1985). British officers detained in a POW camp discover that their escape plans are threatened by an informer, Richard Todd and Bernard Lee star. Don Chaffey directs (T) (5259529)
- 2.30 Hampton Court Palace (T) (377)
- 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (984)
- 4.30 Countdown (T) (1358904)
- 5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (648)
- 6.00 TFI Friday Chris Evans is joined by Anteneh, Turner and Ron Addison plus music from Divine Comedy plus (43731)
- 7.00 Channel 4 News; Weather (T) (583713)
- 7.55 Music of the Millennium Lionel Richie selects his favourite singer (T) (901087)
- 8.00 The Lost Gardens of Heligan Tim Smit discovers how Victorian gardeners were able to grow gigantic pineapples and other fruits (3/6) (T) (4358)
- 8.30 Brookside (T) (6193)
- 9.00 Friends Monica decides to spend a cosy Thanksgiving with the gang, but fate puts the rug from under her (T) (11269)
- 9.30 Streetmate Davina McCall visits Bristol and Cork (T) (14005)



John Mahoney stars as Martin, Frasier's father (10pm)

- 10.00 CHOICE: Frasier. Martin moves in with Niles as Frasier struggles to cope with unemployment (T) (93025)
- 10.30 Eurotrash (T) (823277)
- 11.05 King of the Hill Peggy hears shocking news (T) (2626209)
- 11.35 TFI Friday Show earlier (T) (2113

ATHLETICS 43

Running out of Africa towards a place in the England team



Hoddle happy with rising rate of interest

BY MATT DICKINSON

A NEW year and a new sponsor for the England team, but will 1999 offer a bright new start for Glenn Hoddle? The Nationwide Building Society will certainly hope so after staking £15 million on the fate of the England coach and the international team over the next four years.

Much as they talked earnestly about supporting the grass roots of the game yesterday, the building society's marketing men know that it is to the fluctuating fortunes of Hoddle and his team that they have tied their money and, more significantly, their reputation.

Still, they must be brave gambling men at heart, because they have ignored the recent scandals at the Football Association, which cost Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman their jobs, England's recent European championship qualifying results and Hoddle's uneasy relationship with the media to stake their money on long-term success.

Those in the commercial department at Lancaster Gate can pat themselves on the back for securing almost four times the amount that Green Flag had paid for the same sponsorship privileges, but the new deal also poses one question. If this England team is valued at £15 million over four years, just how much more would a truly successful one be worth?

Perhaps Hoddle will find out in years to come, but first he must face five months that could be defining ones in his reign as England coach. The jury is still out on his credentials as he enters the last 18 months of his contract.

With just one victory from England's first three qualifying matches — and that against Luxembourg — games at home to Poland in March and Sweden in June, followed by Bulgaria away will be critical.

Hoddle announced yesterday that a match had also



Hoddle positive

confidence," he said yesterday, "and I think a sell-out shows that."

"We are delighted to be playing France and so is the country. That will be a hell of a game with a real edge to it, because the result will be important as well as the performance. A good result will give us a major lift, confidence-wise. They don't come any bigger than the world champions, so it couldn't be better."

It is qualification for the European championship that remains the target, though, and England's campaign has got off to a highly unconvincing start. "Two wins at Wembley

day and a draw in Scotland

would put a different complexion on the group," the England coach said yesterday. "It is not really a fresh start for us. That is the wrong attitude. We are bang in the middle of the season and the qualifiers and we are focused on what is ahead."

The game against France is almost sold out and Hoddle believes that the rush for tickets is evidence of continued support for his methods from the country, rather than just a desire to see the world champions. "I am not sure there has been any dip in public

interest in football," he said. "The days of taking the money and running are long gone," Phil Cartling, the FA's commercial director, said.

"The image of the team and players is very, very important.

The sponsors are sharing a bit of the cloak with the national team and we think they are buying into passion, excellence, professionalism and honesty."

The players will not be any richer for the deal. The FA's contribution to the players' pool was settled, after some wrangling, before the World Cup and they will not be receiving any additional cash for commercial appearances.

The FA was not the only organisation to benefit yesterday. The Football League's sponsorship deal with the Nationwide, which was due to expire in the summer, has been extended for another two years with a significant increase, to more than £4 million per year. "Attendances have been rising every year that we have been involved with the Nationwide," Richard Scudamore, the League chief executive, said, "and they are up 4 per cent already this time. We will be building on that with them."

The Football Conference will also be sponsored by the Nationwide for the next two years.

"We are supporting the game of football as a whole," Brian Davis, the chief executive, said. But it is the fortunes of the England team that matter most.

West Ham United are expected to spend the first of the riches from the sale of John Hartson next week when Marc-Vivien Foé arrives at Upton Park. The Cameron midfield player is due in London on Monday for a medical and is expected to conclude a £4 million move.

The 23-year-old was close to signing for Manchester United from Lens last season, but the deal was called off when he broke his leg. United have since made three significant signings and there was no indication yesterday that they would try to resurrect the transfer.

For someone so clearly aware of the importance of shape in the spicy world of modern women's tennis, she is showing an alarming disdain for the small rectangle on the court into which her service should be dropping.

In her second-round match yesterday, the 18-year-old served up 31 double faults against Miho Saeki of Japan, but somehow scrambled to victory 1-6, 6-4, 10-8. Added to the 26 that she produced in the first round, if took her aggregate

to 57. Two matches in Sydney last week yielded 34 doubles and her tally for her past seven matches now stands at 147.

Kournikova may have reached new heights at the Australian Open, the men of Melbourne melting at the feet of the Russian *maiden*, but one aspect of her play has plunged to near-farce.

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Kournikova should beware. A gaggle of teeny talent is clamouring for her crown, as witnessed yesterday by the arrival of another Soviet starlet, Elena Dementieva. Seventeen, leggy and blonde, with elongated fingernails painted metallic silver, she ultimately succumbed to that gnarled veteran, Martina Hingis.

The Swiss miss visibly

frowned upon the gallery's allegiance to the unknown Dementieva, but she will be in for more of the same — and then some — when she faces Jelena Dokic, the 15-year-old local heroine tomorrow.

Hingis has grown up to crave her fame. She describes herself as one of the game's Spice Girls, often treating herself to extravagant diamonds as reward for her performance.

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SNOOKER 46

Taking it to the maximum — and then throwing it all away

RUSSIAN STARLET SUFFERS FROM DOUBLE VISION ON PAINFUL PATH TO THIRD ROUND



Faulty powers: Kournikova tries to get it right this time

Kournikova rues loss of normal service

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT IN MELBOURNE

SHE may look a million dollars, but you wouldn't give tuppence for her service ...

The obsession with Anna Kournikova may have reached new heights at the Australian Open, the men of Melbourne melting at the feet of the Russian *maiden*, but one aspect of her play has plunged to near-farce.

For someone so clearly aware of the importance of shape in the spicy world of modern women's tennis, she is showing an alarming disdain for the small rectangle on the court into which her service should be dropping.

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to 57. Two matches in Sydney last week yielded 34 doubles and her tally for her past seven matches now stands at 147.

"It has been happening for a while, so I am kind of used to it," she said. "I'm really frustrated with it, just like everybody who is watching. In practice, I feel fine, I serve normal and there's no sign of double faults — it's just when I come to the line, when I play, there's something happening."

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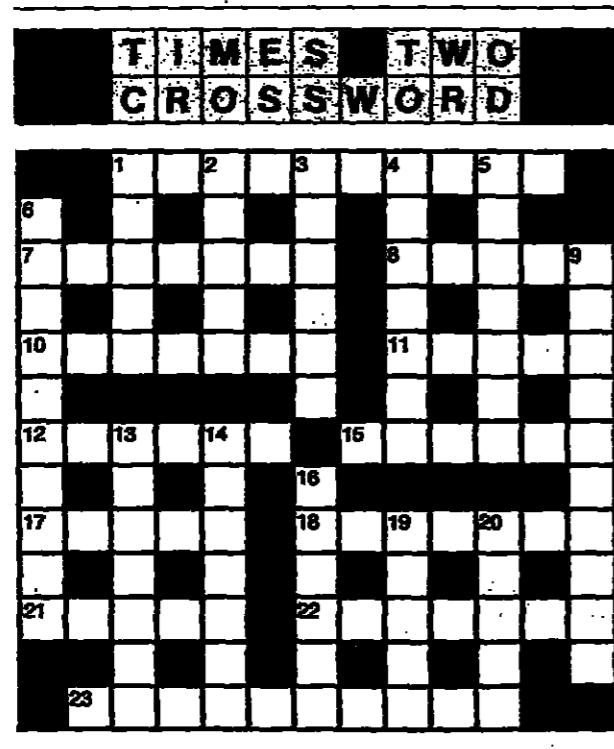
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No 1621

ACROSS
1 Is almost late (4,2,4)
7 Towards centre (7)
8 Coherent-light beam (5)
10 Shared transport arrangement (3,4)
11 One acting for another (5)
12 At one's bidding (6)
15 Of the teeth (6)
17 Metal mixture (5)
18 Set of targets; victims (3,4)
21 Russian whip (5)
22 Redwood tree (7)
23 Impudence (10)

DOWN
1 Shrink in fear (5)
2 Trunk (of body) (5)
3 Contumacious remark (6)
4 Greenery (7)
5 In earnest development (7)
6 Totally dark (5-5)
9 Old, shaky vehicle (10)
13 Delay starting; keep at bay (4,3)
14 (US) unethical eg lawyer (7)
16 Selected (6)
19 Woman's small hat (5)
20 Tusk material (5)

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THE TIMES BOOKSHOP



Thugwane Olympic gold

IN 1972, at the peak of his fame as British sport's best-loved rascal, Dave Bedford sent a message home from the Munich Olympic Games. "Stop whatever you are doing at 5.15pm," he said, via a back page lead in *The Sun*, "gather the family around the TV set and watch me win the 10,000 metres gold medal for Britain." He finished sixth.

Bedford is more guarded now in things he says, otherwise he might have been tempted yesterday to shout the following: "Stop whatever you are doing on Sunday morning, April 18, gather the family around the TV set and watch me win the 10,000 metres gold medal for Britain."

Instead, in revealing the quality of the field that he has signed for the Flora London Marathon, Bedford went no further than to suggest that it was merely "the strongest we have ever assembled". Understatement? Definitely. Given

the names included, and their achievements, there is the potential for London to witness the fastest and most thrilling slog over 26 miles and 38 yards in history.

Bedford, showing the power of his chequered past, has signed the grand slam of honours holders: the world champion

Abel Anton, from Spain; the Olympic champion, Josiah Thugwane, from South Africa; the European champion, Stefano Baldini, from Italy; the world record holder, Ronaldo da Costa, from Brazil.

Additionally, providing depth that even the world championship in Seville this year is unlikely to match, Bedford has secured Khalid Khannouchi, from Morocco; Josephat Kiprono, from Kenya; Alberto Jundado, from Spain; Antonio Pinto, from Portugal; and Lee Bong-Ju, from South Korea. Each is a man of substance in the world of elite marathon running.

To have eight runners capable of running under 2hr 8min is formidable," Bedford said, again with understatement. I count nine, perhaps more. We can forget the idea of the first British men's winner since Eamonn Martin in 1993, despite

the inclusion of Richard Nerrick and Jon Brown, the domestic top two.

Historically, what has London got to beat to claim the best marathon ever? On time alone, the Chicago Marathon last year, when four men beat Ziadouni; or Berlin, where Da Costa took the world record down to 2hr 6min 56sec or the 1988 Rotterdam Marathon, with two men inside 2hr 7min 10sec. The London course may be marginally slower than some, but the size of the elite pack may count the disadvantage.

Just as a 1-1 draw in football can be more entertaining than 3-2 win, a close marathon is often more memorable than a fast one. In that respect, there have been few marathons to compare with London two years ago, when Pinto beat Baldini in a sprint finish to the men's race, while Joyce Chepuchuma, from Kenya, did the same to Liz McColgan in the women's.